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Tuesday 11th July 2023 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

# MINISTER'S 'ROAD TO DAMASCUS'

Independent councillor Joe Behan says he welcomes Minister Simon Harris' 'road to Damascus' experience, regarding the N11, and says he's pleased to see that the unbearable traffic congestion on the N11, suffered daily by County Wicklow residents, is finally getting serious attention.

"I warmly welcome the recent statement in the *Wicklow Times* (July 4th) by the Minister for Higher Education, Simon Harris TD, that he fully agrees 'that the situation cannot continue'. He also states that 'People in County Wicklow should expect a more efficient commute on the N11 (north or south), but this is not the case at the

moment'," said Cllr Behan.

"This is great news because now that the Minister has said this publicly, we can surely expect swift action to resolve the issues with the N11 for the many thousands of Wicklow commuters affected.

"Hopefully, Minister Harris realises that he is a Cabinet Ministerial colleague of the Green Party Leader, Eamon Ryan, who has

prevented the upgrade of the N11/M11 by blocking funding for its improvement. At the last count, almost €5 million in taxpayers' money had been spent in preparing plans for the upgrade but now as a result of Minister Ryan's decisions, this expenditure has been for nothing and the money has been wasted.

"It really is essential that Minister Harris



Pictured in Ashford Studios, at the announcement that Gordon Ramsay's cooking competition series *Next Level Chef* is to be recorded there, were Fine Gael councillors Melanie Corrigan (Cathaoirleach, Bray Municipal District), Aoife Flynn-Kennedy (Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council), Irene Winters (Cathaoirleach, Wicklow Municipal District), and Edward Timmins (Cathaoirleach, Baltinglass Municipal District). See page 6 for more.



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gets to work to produce a rapid turn-around of this disastrous Government indifference to the plight of County Wicklow commuters dependent on the N11 to get to and from work every day.

"It would also be extremely helpful if he got together with the other Minister in the Cabinet who represents the County Wicklow, Minister Stephen Donnelly, to demand an end to the Green Party's objections to improving life for motorists in the county.

"Minister Donnelly has the distinction of being the TD who published drone footage of the early morning N11 traffic congestion and gave the strong impression that he was going to get it fixed.

"In fairness to the Fine Gael and Fianna

Fail Councillors on Wicklow County Council, they have consistently agreed with me when I raise this issue at Council meetings and they are fully behind our efforts to get the funding for the N11 improvements to be restored. I have also supported the Councillors in West Wicklow whose local National Road, the N81, has suffered many years of Government neglect. We work together across party lines to achieve progress and we will continue to do so.

"Perhaps Minister Harris might meet his Fine Gael councillors in the near future to plan a strategy to work together on this issue? And, no doubt, Minister Donnelly would be willing to work with his Council colleagues to do the

same. The seanfhocal 'Ní neart go cur le chéile' was never more

appropriate than in this situation and hopefully if we do work together,

the people of County Wicklow will benefit from our unity."

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# Wicklow PPN members have summer meet up



Wicklow Public Participation Network members at their summer meet up

Membership of Wicklow PPN has grown to 413 community groups including residents' associations, community councils, youth groups, older people's groups, sports clubs, Traveller groups, disability groups, community centre committees, environment protection groups, Tidy Towns and more, attendees of the Wicklow PPN summer meet up were told.

The meeting took place in The Avon on Saturday 24th June beside Blessington lakes. Following a report of the PPNs work to date, approval of finances and policies, the members received a presentation from Kim Townsend Smyth, Community Climate Action Officer with Wicklow County Council. The Community Climate Action Programme is a new programme which aims to support and empower communities to take climate action at a local level.

Through the Community Climate Action Programme, as supported by the Climate Action Fund, Wicklow County Council will award grants from a total funding pot of €646,000 to community organisations to support citizens to step up local climate action. The overall objective of the programme

is to shape and build low carbon, sustainable communities to contribute to national climate and energy targets. More details of this fund and the application process will be circulated by Wicklow County Council and Wicklow PPN very soon.

Members had the opportunity to network over lunch and some remained for a guided walk on the Greenway to Burgage Castle facilitated by Blessington Tidy Towns.

More information about Wicklow PPN is available on their Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/CWPPN](http://www.facebook.com/CWPPN) and Webpage [www.countywicklowppn.ie](http://www.countywicklowppn.ie). Groups can also Email: [info@countywicklowppn.ie](mailto:info@countywicklowppn.ie) or telephone Helen on 087 189 5145 or Grainne on 086 048 743.

## 'Progress needed on Delgany to Blacklion cycleway and road'

**Cllr Derek Mitchell has urged for progress on the Delgany to Blacklion cycleway and road.**

This road connects five large schools and is narrow and dangerous to cycle along. When built it will provide 4m wide cycle and footpaths on either side of a 6m road. This will be much safer and

it should encourage children to walk and cycle to school.

"This has been planned for decades but progress has been intermittent, some bits done and much not done," said Cllr Mitchell. "The Engineer reported to the Municipal District meeting that it was intended to complete the tender documents by October and to proceed to appoint a con-

tractor by year end.

"However the Council has a serious shortage of Engineers and this could delay progress. I asked that it would be done in the school holidays to reduce congestion. This would not be possible as it is a big job but he would hope that one of the 2 sections of it could be completed before the next one is started to try to reduce congestion."

## Wicklow Mountains National Park Summer Lectures 2023

There are eight wonderful speakers over July and August taking part in the Wicklow Mountains National Park Summer Lecture series, which promises to be an exciting look at some of Wicklow and Ireland's flora, fauna, habitats, heritage and more.

This year, in addition to a focus on nature and natural history, organisers have collaborated with the OPW Visitor Centre in Glendalough to bring you two lectures on the archaeology and human history of the National Park! All lectures start at 7.30pm in the Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Base, Trooperstown, Laragh, A98 VY72. The venue is wheelchair accessible. Lectures are free of charge to attend. To book and for more information call us on 0404 45425 or email [educationwmp@npws.gov.ie](mailto:educationwmp@npws.gov.ie).

## Bray Beach BBQ

Get ready to indulge in a sizzling celebration of sun, sand, and mouth-watering food this summer as the Beach BBQ Festival makes its return to Bray's spectacular seafront on Saturday, July 22nd and Sunday, July 23rd, 2023. This family-friendly scorcher is set to be the ultimate summer party, offering an incredible selection of activities including a funfair, demos, games, DJ sets, mouth-watering BBQ & food trucks.

The festival promises an unforgettable taste experience combined with a vibrant outdoor party atmosphere. From 11am daily, a top-notch line-up of vendors will fire up their grills, serving up a delectable array of BBQ meats including burgers, sausages, kebabs, wings, veggie and vegan dishes with sauces and sides that will tantalise your taste buds.

Best of all, admission is completely free, making

it an accessible and enjoyable experience for everyone. No tickets are required, so gather your mates or family and head over to Bray for the ultimate summer party. For more information, please visit the official festival website at [beachbbqfestival.com](http://beachbbqfestival.com)

## Traditional Dixieland Jazz

A unique Traditional Dixieland Jazz session with dancing will take place in the Eblana Club, 3 Eblana Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, on Thursday 13th July. The only regular jazz session of its type in Ireland will have its "doors open" from 7.30pm. Entry will be free and all are welcome.

## Casting teens for new series

Macalla, a television production company in Dublin are currently producing a new tv series for RTE. They are looking for outgoing, chatty 12-15 year old teenage boys to take part in a two-week summer camp at the end of August. They are looking to cast predominantly in the Dublin/Wicklow area.

Permission from a parent/guardian is required. Applicants must be available for the last two weeks of August. If you are interested have your parent/guardian send in your video of you talking about yourself and why you would like to take part. Send to [castingmacalla@gmail.com](mailto:castingmacalla@gmail.com)

## IWA's inclusive Run n' Roll Race

Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) have launched the IWA Run'n'Roll race. The race is open to individuals of all ages and abilities. It seeks to support and promote an inclusive society for people with disabilities. By 'Running-n-Rolling' in the race over 2.5km or 5km, individuals of all abilities can show their allyship with people with physical disabilities and, in doing so, help raise funds for Irish Wheelchair Association. Runners, rollers, and strollers will be at their marks to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in Irish society on Sunday, September 3rd, in a relaxed, fun, and family-friendly atmosphere at St. Anne's Park, Raheny, Dublin 5. Participants can register for the race here: <https://www.poppraces.ie/race/iwa-run-n-roll-2023-proudly-supported-by-liberty-insurance/>. All participants who register for the race will receive a specially designed commemorative t-shirt and medal as part of their welcome pack.

## Walking group in the Brockagh

On Monday mornings weekly at 10am join the Laragh walking group at the Brockagh Resource Centre in Laragh for a walk around the Glendalough area for approximately one hour. No need to book, just show up on the day.

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# 'Bray Air Display decision shows people are not being listened to'

Green Party Councillor for Bray Cllr Erika Doyle has spoken of her disappointment that Wicklow County Council did not include any measures to address or acknowledge either the climate crisis or concerns of local residents in their recent granting of the Bray Air Display license.

The event has increased to two days this year and Cllr Doyle says while there are many positives to the show and a great number of people enjoy it, organisers have missed an opportunity to send out a message that they listen to the people who live nearby.

Cllr Doyle said, "I'm aware that a great many people enjoy and support the air show and would not want to interfere with that. However when the license application went in this year and submissions were sought, I collated a list of concerns from people living around the Bray Head and seafront areas. I also requested that the organisers follow the lead of air shows around Europe and the UK and acknowledge their carbon footprint. Offsets are easily accessed and it would be a relatively simple process to make the show carbon neutral by for example a tree planting project. One other ask was that the private company that enjoys the use of Bray Head for expensive pleasure flights, reduce their hours of operation, so that people living in the vicinity can enjoy the amenity of their back gardens.

"This week the license was granted for the air show by Wicklow County Council as expected. There is a list of conditions however most of these are standard conditions that you would expect at any large scale event where risk is present. I am extremely disappointed that the planning authority in Wicklow County Council, the first local authority in the country to declare a climate emergency, did not see fit to include a condition instructing the organisers to acknowledge



Cllr Erika Doyle

the biggest threat facing mankind and the role fossil fuels play in impacting climate and air quality. Not only that but residents can now look forward to not one, but two full days of helicopters flying over their homes and gardens, drowning out conversation and making life for those with sensory issues very difficult. There were other aspects of my submission that were not referenced in the conditions, such as access for carers and issues around parking for the elderly or vulnerable people. Ultimately, every event on public space is open to scrutiny, and the license application process allows members of the public to make suggestions as to how to improve the experience for visitors, and more importantly for local residents. I had hoped that the very reasonable suggestions made by me and others would be listened to and taken on board.

"The ball is now back in the court of the organisers. I had hoped that they would take it

upon themselves to address these matters, and I am appealing to them now to please send a message and organise and advertise offsetting measures to show that they are aware of the impact of fossil fuels. I have read their Sustainability policy which seems to heap the responsibility back onto the attendees for example leave no trace, reusable water bottles, public transport, etc. These measures are of course important but there is no explanation as to if or how they plan to mitigate for the carbon emitted during the two day show if they are committed as they say that are, to 'playing their part in Ireland's journey to combat climate change'.

"Looking to the future, climate simply has to be the overarching principle by which decisions are made by Wicklow County Council planners. Climate change means flooding, water and food shortages, parts of the world becoming uninhabitable, a moderate county like Ireland suffering extreme weather events causing loss to life, all within our lifetimes. Those of us living in a coastal location along the Wicklow coast should be extremely concerned as large parts of the coast and along the Dargle in Bray are projected to be below flood level by 2050, from rising sea levels and coastal flooding. This is as real as it gets. Will offsetting an air display significantly impact on our carbon emissions as a country? No it won't. But what it will do is normalise having to factor the impact on climate into actions and decisions made by those in positions of power."

## Map redesign leads to 72% rise in people saying they would test for radon gas

Householders are more willing to test their homes for radon gas when the risk is shown to them using a redesigned official map. In an experiment, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and conducted by the ESRI's Behavioural Research Unit, the redesign led to a 72% jump in people saying they would test for radon. Wicklow is a high risk county for the dangerous gas.

Although radon exposure in homes can cause lung cancer, the study found that 90% of people don't know the risk in their area. Testing the level of radon gas in homes is easy, but the large majority of householders don't do it.

The researchers tested 16 different maps in an online experiment involving 1,700 adults. Maps varied in subtle design features based on the psychology of risk perception. All the new maps outperformed the then in-use EPA map, increasing

appreciation of the risk and willingness to test. The best performing map has now been adopted by the EPA.

One interesting aspect of the study was that while people said that they disliked maps that used statistics (e.g. '1-in-5 homes at high risk'), these maps led to a much higher willingness to test for radon. Colour and the number of risk categories on maps mattered too.

"In some areas, as many as one-in-five homes are at risk, but most people don't know

their level of exposure," said Dr Shane Timmons of the ESRI's Behavioural Research Unit. "Radon has no colour or smell, so the only way to tell if it is present is to test your home. Our findings show that how risk from radon is communicated is particularly using statistics that people may not like - can motivate people to test their home."

Speaking about the radon map, Alison Dowdall, EPA said: "Radon is a serious public health issue and is linked to about 350 cases of lung

cancer each year in Ireland. The new EPA map provides clear information on radon risk and makes it easier for people to understand the risk where they live and to take action. Radon is easy to test for and easy to fix, so learning more about your risk and how you can protect you and your family is critical. We would encourage all householders and businesses, especially those in high radon areas, to test for radon."

The new radon risk map is available on the EPA's website.



Andrea Herrera and Angela Tennyson at the Wicklow Pride Parade in Wicklow Town

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# Older People's Council's new executive committee



Clodagh Whelan, Wicklow Age Friendly Programme Manager, Wicklow County Council, with members of the OPC Executive: Pat Riordan, Gertie Salley, Mai Quaid, Carina Holmes (Chairperson), Kathleen Kelleher, Marie McCourt, Tom Cavanagh, Betty Kelly, Orla Finn and Suzanne Bennett.

A new Executive Group and Chairperson has been elected by the County Wicklow Older People's Council (OPC).

The Older People's Council is a representative group of older people, established by Wicklow County Council as part of the national Age Friendly Programme.

The key purpose is to provide the authentic voice of older people in the county, representing the diversity that exists among our ageing population.

The induction meeting for the new OPC Executive, held at Clermont House (8th June), was facilitated by Alice Corbett, Age Friendly Ireland Regional Manager for the South-East and Clodagh Whelan, Age Friendly Programme Manager for County Wicklow.

Carina Holmes, Chairperson of the new OPC, said: "It is a great pleasure and honour for me to be elected as Chair and I look forward to working with the new Executive group and the Wicklow Age Friendly County Alliance."

Members of the new OPC Executive are: Carina Holmes (Chair), Suzanne Bennett, Eamon Burgess, Tom Cavanagh, Orla Finn, Anne Halpin, Kathleen Kelleher, Elizabeth Kelly, Marie McCourt, Mai Quaid, Pat Riordan, Gertrude Salley and Hilary Taylor.

With representatives from the five Municipal Districts across County Wicklow, the new OPC Executive has a wide and diverse range of experience among its members who also represent special interest groups such as Dementia Support, Migrant Communities, Community groups,

Care in the Community, Arts, Culture, and Disability Support groups. Following their next meeting in August, additional members may be invited to join the OPC Executive to represent other special interest groups.

The Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, stated: "It is essential that this very large demographic group be heard and that their needs are met. As our aging population is projected to increase, with people living longer into the future, we want to ensure that Wicklow a great place to grow older for all."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, welcomed the new OPC executive group, saying: "I look forward to working with the new Older People's Council representatives, thorough the Wicklow Age Friendly County Alliance, to ensure that the voice of older people is heard and the County Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy 2023-27 is implemented."

Clodagh Whelan, Age Friendly Programme Manager for County Wicklow noted that: "Recently released details from the 2022 Census show that 27 per cent the population of County Wicklow is now over 55."

Residents of County Wicklow and who are over the age of 55 and want to find out more about the work of the Older People's Council and County Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy 2023-27, should contact: agefriendly@wicklowcoco.ie

## SSE Renewables supports Arklow Sea Scouts' youth programme with the purchase of a new RS Toura Vessel

Sea scout groups from the county recently gathered for a day of competition and fun - a perfect day to take the new RS Toura vessel out onto the glistening water at the Cove on South Beach.

Arklow Sea Scouts purchased two new RS Toura vessels, one supported through the SSE Renewables Arklow Bank Sponsorship Fund and the second, through a Government Sports' Capital grant. SSE Renewables supported Arklow Sea Scouts in its

purchase of the vessel to facilitate youth scouting and maritime training activities.

Laura Coey, Arklow Sea Scouts said, "The entire scouting group in Arklow and the wider scouting community are very grateful to SSE Renewables. They have

provided our group with the opportunity to expand our water activities for not only our youth members, but for the wider scouting community also. The same week that the RS Toura arrived, our scouts gave 191 beavers and many of their leaders from all over county

Wicklow, their very first sailing experience. The new Toura is a total game changer for us, allowing us to coach all scouts from zero to competent levels. Prior to SSE Renewables' support, we weren't in the position to have this progression system in the group".

Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager, SSE Renewables said, "SSE Renewables' sponsorship of the RS Toura vessel will benefit not only Arklow Sea Scouts in developing an appreciation for scouting and safe maritime leisure activities, but also for other members who visit Arklow and make use of the new vessel. We are very grateful for the chance to support this initiative. We similarly want to extend our thanks to those who tirelessly volunteer to support local youth activities and those who participate in weekly beach clean-ups".

SSE Renewables is Ireland and the UK's leading renewable energy developer, owner and operator with plans to expand in selected international markets to deliver the green energy the world needs.



Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager, SSE Renewables with Sean Cassidy, Ivo Kazimirs (Arklow Sea Scouts) and members of the Avoca and Kilcoole Scouts at the Cove, South Beach, Arklow

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# FOX Entertainment announces significant commitment to TV production in Ashford

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD last Monday attended an event at which FOX Entertainment announced a significant commitment worth more than €30 million to Irish TV production and creative services.

Last week's announcement confirmed that the new global hub for FOX Entertainment's US hit cooking competition series Next Level Chef will be a purpose-built, brand new sound stage at Ashford Studios.

With award-winning chef, restaurateur and presenter Gordon Ramsay at the helm and recently renewed for its third and fourth seasons, Next Level Chef will be produced by Studio Ramsay with BiggerStage as the production company. This announcement follows a period of growth for international TV production in Ireland to the benefit of local production companies and creative talent. FOX Entertainment has produced

more than 60 hours of primetime US programming in Ireland in the last 18 months, supporting more than two dozen Irish SMEs and creating over 300 hundred jobs. FOX Entertainment series recently produced in Ireland include Beat Shazam, Name That Tune and Don't Forget the Lyrics.

In 2021, FOX Alternative Entertainment, in partnership with BiggerStage, also produced the variety competition programme The Big Deal for Virgin Media Television. Last December, FOX Entertainment's Emmy Award-winning animation studio Bento Box Entertainment and Dublin-based Boulder Media entered into a production services agreement for a

range of primetime animated series, including FOX's highly anticipated comedies Krapopolis and Grimsburg. Both series, fully-owned by FOX Entertainment, underscore the company's ongoing commitment to the vibrant local creative industry, building on its existing track record of successful programmes produced in Ireland. A recent Economic Impact Assessment conducted by PWC highlights the immediate opportunity for unscripted production to become a €300m - €500m industry delivering hundreds of jobs and driving investment in skills, training, infrastructure and regional development should the right fiscal incentive be put in place. Speaking from the event, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD said:

"Today marks a momentous occasion for international television production in Ireland. The last number of years have seen a surge in the sector which is now matched with unparalleled investment from FOX Entertainment and over 300 jobs in the creative industry. "Ireland is perfectly placed to become a global hub for unscripted productions. Our membership of the EU, close proximity to the UK, strong cultural alignment with the USA and skilled work force makes Ireland a favourable location for investment. "The benefits from today's announcement will be seen not only in Wicklow but across the



Pictured with An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar in Ashford Studios are Fine Gael Local Area Representative Graham Richmond, Cllr Shay Cullen, Cllr Irene Winters (Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Municipal District), Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy (Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council), Cllr Edward Timmind (Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District), Cllr Melanie Corrigan (Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District) and Cllr Derek Mitchell.



Cllr Shay Cullen meeting with An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

whole creative industry in Ireland. This has the future potential to bring about further international production hubs and create secure jobs in a vibrant sector." Making the announcement at today's event, Rob Wade, CEO of FOX Entertainment, added: "It has been an honour and privilege to partner with a number of Ireland's strongest and most creative companies and talent over the past several years. Their impact on our growing slate of unscripted and animated series has been substantial, allowing us to produce premium content in highly efficient and effective ways. We are grateful to An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar for this opportunity to deepen our relationships and expand our presence in the country, while helping drive local skills and talent even further and working with the production industry bodies and the Irish Government to promote Ireland to the wider international television community."

Regarding the announcement, Gordon Ramsay noted: "Creating a Global hub in Ireland for Next Level Chef really is an exciting opportunity. Not only do I get to spend weeks filming in a county that I love, it also creates an appealing opportunity for our international partners from around the world." Also speaking at the event, Pat Kiely, CEO & Founder of BiggerStage, said: "There has never been a better opportunity for Ireland to grow its TV Production sector through international investment. The incredible creative talent and skills, that allows Ireland to punch above its weight in the audio-visual industry, will now benefit from the pace at which the international unscripted TV industry is growing. "Today's announcement, along with other great international partnerships developing in our sector, are providing the proof-points to make Ireland a world-class destination. In turn, this will help grow the wider creative and media industry, support training and regional development and above all create hundreds of sustainable jobs."

Welcoming this investment to Wicklow, Minister for Further and

Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris, TD said: "This is such an exciting and significant investment and a transformational project for Wicklow, the region and for this important industry. This project is going to unlock the potential of so many young workers in the sector and I am really delighted to hear about the opportunities this is going to bring in terms of upskilling and reskilling."

My Department will continue to work to ensure that we can meet the skills needs of the sector. This is a real game changing investment for the future which I am so glad to welcome in my own county and constituency."

Leo Clancy, CEO Enterprise Ireland, added:

"I would like to congratulate Fox Entertainment and BiggerStage on their announcement today. Their continued collaborations align to significant growth in international tv production in Ireland, supporting creative companies and professions in the digital technologies sector. We at Enterprise Ireland commend Fox Entertainment and Bigger Stage in creating innovative partnerships

and showcasing talent in Ireland to create more jobs in this rapidly growing industry."

Jennifer Whitmore TD, in attendance at the official announcement, said: "Today's announcement is excellent news for Ashford Studios, Wicklow and Irish television production. Ashford Studios has brought a lot of work to Wicklow, creating local jobs and benefiting the local economy with the footfall that projects as these get. This level of investment from a major international entertainment firm also dramatically influences the quality of television production in Ireland."

"This new project is one of many large-scale productions in Wicklow. Hollywood movies such as Braveheart and Elle Enchanted and recent Netflix productions like The Winx Saga and The Wonder have all used Wicklow as their backdrop. As Wicklow becomes a more well-established hub for film production and television, we need to see investment in studios like Ashford and for resources in the surrounding areas such as parking and transport links. There is an opportunity to make Wicklow the go-to destination for filming in Western Europe."



Deputy Whitmore with Fox Entertainment CEO Rob Wade



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# Ponds celebrated at Wild Acres with ReWild Wicklow

Ponds were the theme of a recent visit of 40 ReWild Wicklow volunteers to the Wild Acres Nature Reserve in Scratenagh near Arklow. The volunteers were there to help dig two new ponds on the reserve to bring the total to 25 and learn about why these freshwater habitats are so important for nature. Also in the volunteer crew were Jennifer Whitmore TD and Dublin-based comedian Colm O'Regan.

"Our volunteer numbers keep on growing and growing!" said chairperson of ReWild Wicklow

Danny Alvey, "and this was a particularly popular event given the activity. We had been hoping

to help out on a pond digging day for a while and no better place to do it than on Wild Acres with self-described 'pond-mad' owner Brian O'Toole. As well as being a host to so much animal and plant life, ponds can help sequester 20-30 times as much carbon as a native woodland on the same site would. I would love to see more ponds dug all across Wicklow and I think it's something that could in particular be done on public land all around the county."

"This was not my first time out with the ReWild Wicklow volunteers," added Jennifer Whitmore TD, "but I was really impressed with how many people of all different ages and abilities showed up today to help out. It reminded me of the Irish 'Meitheals' of years gone by where neighbours would come together to work on each other's farms or for a project of public good. What Danny and all the co-founders of ReWild Wicklow have achieved in the last two years has been incredible. It is so heartening to see people come together in Wicklow to try preserve

and expand our precious biodiversity."

The volunteers also helped with maintaining a raised bed of 400 young oak trees and added another 100 that had germinated in the reserve's polytunnel. These oaklings will be grown up in size at the reserve until they are tall and strong enough to be planted out across Wicklow as part of ReWild Wicklow's work.

Wild Acres was established in 2017 when

Brian and Gilly purchased 17.5 acres of undulating agricultural land in Scratenagh, on the beautiful Redcross river, with the aim of transforming it into a nature reserve, honey farm and biodiversity education experience. The couple now organise workshops, courses and guided walks for all sorts of groups and of course sell locally-produced honey! You can find out more about the reserve at [wildacres.ie](http://wildacres.ie).



Brian O'Toole of Wild Acres talking about the benefits of ponds



Jennifer Whitmore TD with Danny Alvey at Wild Acres Nature Reserve



ReWild Wicklow volunteers pond digging at Wild Acres Nature Reserve

## Council agrees to implement strategy for community gardens and allotments

On Monday 3rd July, Greystones Councillor Scott's motion on developing a strategy for community gardens and allotments in County Wicklow was agreed at July's Council meeting.

The motion, seconded by Cllr Leonard and supported by Cllr Kavanagh, was passed following unanimous support from all councillors. The motion echoes similar actions car-

ried out by Kildare County Council who are preparing an allotments and community gardens strategy and have issued a public consultation asking residents if they would like an allot-

ment or community garden near them.

Speaking after the meeting Scott said: "This motion was brought to enable communities all over Wicklow to make it easier to request

access to land for growing their own food locally. Without a doubt there is huge demand out there and I am constantly contacted by groups and individuals who are interested in finding an allotment or community garden.

"Public allotments and community gardens are becoming an increasingly important element of sustainable communities. They have a number of benefits including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, biodiversity and providing a cheaper local and sustainable source of food.

"Despite the Council stating support for such facilities through an objective in the County Development Plan, no steps have been taken to progress this. Currently Wicklow is one of eight local authorities failing in this regard. The need for a strategy is long overdue. This motion asked the Council to lead by example as a landowner to deliver these amazing community spaces."

Donal McCormack from the Blessington Allotments Campaign said: "Our campaign has been requesting

land within Blessington from Wicklow County Council since 2018. Since that time, we have given out over 1100 plants such as strawberry, raspberry or blueberry plants, apple or pear trees to every primary school student in Blessington which demonstrates the need for community growing spaces.

"Every local authority which borders Wicklow provides allotments and community gardens. Reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change support community gardening as a climate action. The final report from the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss also highlighted how the state must do most to provide allotments and community gardens through local authority initiatives in conjunction with private landowners, in both urban and rural communities. "We hope that this is one step closer towards community gardens and allotments being set up in communities across Wicklow."

The next steps will be an assessment of what suitable land is available and a call out to the public for expressions of interest.



Cllr Lourda Scott with Donal McCormack, Blessington Allotments Campaign



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**5pm on Friday 14th July.**



# Live-in Care with ALHomecare... Works for my family!

**When Alanna's father received a diagnosis of Alzheimer's six years ago, it was a devastating blow for the family. He was only in his fifties.**

"Dad retired at 54 and by the following year we started noticing different things, like that he was getting up at night and walking around, or just being a little confused," Alanna explains.

For the first four years after his diagnosis, Alanna's father was able to go about his everyday life as before, which was wonderful.

But life threw another curveball at the family when, in January of 2022, her mother became very ill, ultimately spending 3 months in hospital. It was an incredibly scary experience for the family, not least because it coincided with a period of decline in her father.

"By that stage Dad couldn't be on his own and we were thrown into crisis mode trying to figure out how are we going to get through the next few months?" says Alanna.

It was through the public health services

that Alanna first heard of ALHomecare – which stands for Affordable Live-in Homecare.

ALHomecare helped the family through the crisis. "When all of this happened there were lots of options out there for us as a family but no other solution," she says.

The family's carer, Sara, was from Portugal. "She was an angel. She slotted into our family unit like she was always there. Sara prepared nutritious meals and did general day to day things like laundry," says Alanna.

Thankfully, the point came last October when Alanna's mother was well enough to care for her husband, and Sara's time with the family came to an end.

"ALHomecare was the only solution for

us and I would highly recommend it to others. I've never seen compassion like it." Says Alanna.

Give ALHomecare a call and find out why more and more people are availing of this person-centred approach to home care

that's more affordable than a nursing home or private visiting care service.

If you'd like to find out more visit [www.alhomecare.ie](http://www.alhomecare.ie) or call ALHomecare's nationwide inquiry lines: **087 991 6791** or **087 744 0729**.



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Alanna with her Dad and his grandson.



# Let's Play programme launched across Wicklow



Pictured at the launch of the Let's Play packs at Ballywaltrim were L-R: Magda McAuliffe (Ballywaltrim Library); Aisling Hubbard (Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership); Lorraine Dunne (Healthy Wicklow) Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council; Margaret Birchall (Wicklow Libraries) and Meadhbh Cahill (Sl-intecare Healthy Communities).

Lat week saw the launch of the Let's Play Programme for children across Co. Wicklow.

Wicklow County Council - in conjunction with Healthy Wicklow, Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership, Slaintecare Healthy Communities, and the Wicklow Libraries, launched the Let's Play programme across various locations in the county.

This government-led initiative aims to promote play for all children, fostering active and healthy lifestyles while encouraging community engagement and physical well-being.

Let's Play Ballywaltrim, Bray, took place on Wednesday 28th June signifying the official unveiling of the 'Let's Play' packs which will be made available to the public to rent for free at their local libraries.

The packs include beloved classics such as Snake and Ladders, Jamanga Towers, Sports Day Set, Horseshoe Pitching Game, and Big Fish Small Fish Game.

This was followed last week by events in Dunlavin, Blessington, Rathdrum and Greystones.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, highlighted the significance of the programme for the local community, saying: "By providing free access to these games, we aim to ensure that all chil-

dren have the opportunity to play and have fun."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, expressed her enthusiasm for the 'Let's Play' programme, stating: "We are proud to lead the Let's Play initiative in partnership with Healthy Wicklow, Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership, Sl-intecare Healthy Communities, and the Wicklow Libraries. This initiative underscores our commitment to fostering healthy habits among children, promoting active play, and cultivating a sense of joy and togetherness."

Director of Services Michael Nicholson added: "Let's Play is the result of a remarkable partnership between government agencies and community organisations. By working together, we can create meaningful opportunities for children to engage in play, develop essential skills, and build lasting relationships within our communities."

For more information about the Let's Play programme and to access Let's Play packs, please visit your local Wicklow library or contact Wicklow County Council. You can also find out more by following @ActiveWicklow on social media.

## First fit farmer programme up and running in Carnew

The first Fit Farmer Programme is running every Thursday in County Wicklow in Carnew Mart. It began on Thursday, 29th June and runs until Thursday 27th July.

Under the Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4, Healthy Wicklow and Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership have held a number of consultations with the farmers and have designed a health and wellbeing programme which will contain a different workshop each week. The farming community is a cohort the Council has not targeted before and a creative approach was used to work collaboratively with a number of different partners to boost resilience and support their physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County, Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, said: "We welcome projects like this that will have a real impact on the health and wellbeing of the communities across County Wicklow."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, welcomed the programme saying: "It is great to see initiatives like the Fit Farmer programme being delivered at a local level in partnership with a number of organisations, we are delighted to support the implementation of health and wellbeing programmes and projects in a variety of settings."

The schedule for the remainder of the programme is: The Irish Heart Foundation Mobile Bus (July 13th, 9:30am-5pm, email healthywicklow@wicklowcoco.ie to book); Skin Cancer (July 20th, 12:30pm); Smoking and Nutrition (July 27th, 2pm); and Walk & Talk (Every Thursday, 7pm, Coolafancy new track).

## Sanctuary Swimmers are making a splash

A first-of-its-kind solidarity-through-swimming initiative is set to come to beaches across Ireland this summer in a collaboration between the Sanctuary Runners organisation and Swim Ireland.

Commencing in Bray last week on July 5th, the 'Sanctuary Swimmers' programme sees groups made up of locals, refugees and others who have moved from abroad, learn how to swim in Ireland's coastal waters.

As well as in Bray, 'Sanctuary Swimmers' groups will be set up in Myrtleville (Cork), Dunmore East (Waterford), Dollymount Strand (Dublin) and Salthill (Galway).

"We're so delighted to get our multicultural swimming groups into the water," explained Ailis McSweeney, the Ireland Lead Manager of the Sanctuary Runners. Sanctuary Runners is a multi-award-winning not-for-profit organisation which has been using running and walking to bring together locals, asylum seekers and refugees across Ireland since 2018.

"This summer's expansion of the Sanctuary Swimmers' programme follows a very suc-

cessful pilot in Cork last summer. We found that as people learned to swim with their Swim Ireland instructor, they built a bond as a group and barriers to communication and integration were overcome. Swimming in the open water provides a unique opportunity for people, many of whom have had negative experiences with water, to overcome their fears, support each other, make new friends and learn a vital life skill which will help them enjoy our beautiful country for years to come."

Swim Ireland CEO Sarah Keane said: "The open water can, for some, invoke a feeling of fear, for others a sense of adventure. Those emotions are heightened for those who have never been in the sea before. Transcending these is the power of the Sanctuary Swimmers' initiative and doing it all alongside people we care about and who support us is what makes

it truly unique."

The groups across Ireland will engage in four-week training programmes and each group will contain many different nationalities. Supporting the initiative with the provision of wetsuits for people living in Direct Provision are Irish sportswear company PortWest and local sports partnerships in Galway, Wicklow, Waterford, Cork and Dublin are partnering with Sanctuary Swimmers for each location.

Ailis McSweeney added: "So much of our work focuses on mental health and well-being and there really is nothing quite like open sea swimming to help improve both."

"And it's not just the swimming but also the time spent chatting on the beach, those much-needed coffees shared as swimmers warm up and the sun goes down, the dancing and joy that envelopes the initiative, the getting to know other local swimmers and that feeling of accomplishment at the end."



A group of Sanctuary Swimmers

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At the **Talbot Group**, we are leading providers of adult and children's intellectual disability services in North County Dublin, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Kildare. We are now expanding our services to Wicklow. To support our new Community Disability Services in Wicklow Town, we are currently recruiting for

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**Tinakilly Country House, Rathnew, Wicklow**

on Wednesday 12th July 2023 from 9.30am – 4.00pm.

Please bring an up to date copy of your CV with you.

Further details can be obtained on the careers tab on our website [www.talbotgroup.ie](http://www.talbotgroup.ie) or by email to [recruitment@talbotgroup.ie](mailto:recruitment@talbotgroup.ie) or [elainehr@talbotgroup.ie](mailto:elainehr@talbotgroup.ie).



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# Wicklow primary schools awarded for achievements in STEM

**15 primary schools in Wicklow have been awarded the 2023 Curious Minds Award, celebrating primary schools across Ireland that have adopted innovative approaches to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) learning and engagement.**

Announcing the 2023 Curious Mind Awards, Minister Simon Harris, TD, said: "I am delighted to announce the 15 winners of this year's SFI Curious Minds Awards from Wicklow. I want to congratulate all involved for their hard work and enthusiasm. Through programmes such as the Curious Minds Awards, we see first-hand teachers and schools empowering curiosity through a hands-on, inquiry-based approach to STEM learning."

"The high level of

engagement this year can be credited to the schools and teachers who have put effort into giving their students access to STEM in a fun, interactive and educational way."

The Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) programme, run in conjunction with the European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO), aims to increase interest in STEM among primary school students, parents, and teachers nationwide in a fun and interactive way.

The awards were granted for a wide range of innovative and engaging STEM activities from investigating renewable energy, growing vegetables, mini-beast hunts, learning about materials and maths through baking, design and make challenges, marble runs, enhancing their technology skills through coding, and using STEM to solve everyday problems.

Primary Schools received awards in three categories: The Silver Award, recognising schools entering for the first

time; the Gold Award, for schools further along their STEM journey; and the Platinum Award, for schools who have achieved previous awards and want to integrate STEM into the community further.

This year, three Wicklow schools received the Silver Award, 11 received the Gold Award and one received the Platinum Award.

Commenting on the awards, Professor Philip Nolan, Director General of Science Foundation Ireland said: "At Science Foundation Ireland, we are committed to making science accessible to all. Introducing students to sci-

ence in a practical, hands-on, enjoyable and interactive way, tapping into and nurturing their natural curiosity, is a core objective for SFI as we continue to break down barriers to engaging young people in STEM. The Curious Minds Awards are a perfect way to motivate students' interest in STEM in the classroom. It is extremely positive to see so many primary schools in Wicklow taking part, and I congratulate all the teachers, schools and parents for their commitment to STEM."

Minister Harris recently visited Kilmacanogue NS to congratulate them on their Silver Award. He said "It was fantastic to get to meet with many

of the school's students and talk about how they and their families can take part in activities involving science and maths, and how those activities can be both educational and fun. It is great to see schools taking the initiative and engaging in extra-curricular activities and I want to thank the staff of Kilmacanogue N.S. for empowering their students through hands-on and practical approaches to learning about science and maths. Science is, and should be, easily accessible, and I look forward to being able to continue supporting initiatives that improves the educational opportunities for our young people."

## Wicklow schools in receipt of awards

*Silver Award - Kilmacanogue N.S.*

*Silver Award - Marino School*

*Silver Award - St. Coen's National School*

*Gold Award - S N Padraig Naofa*

*Gold Award - Woodstock Educate Together National School*

*Gold Award - St. Patrick's National School*

*Gold Award - Gaelscoil Chill Mhant-in*

*Gold Award - St. Catherine's Special School*

*Gold Award - Delgany N.S.*

*Gold Award - St. Peter's Primary School*

*Gold Award - Greystones Community N.S.*

*Gold Award - Scoil Aod-n Naofa, Carnew N.S.*

*Gold Award - Kilcoole Primary School*

*Gold Award - Moneystown N.S.*

*Platinum Award - St. Kieran's National School*



Minister Harris and Ciaran Seoighe, Deputy Director General, SFI, with pupils of Kilmacanogue National School, who won a Silver Award



Pictured at St. Peter's Catholic Primary School in Bray, with Minister Harris, are Tanja Calis, Senior Executive Education and Public Engagement, SFI, and Ciaran Seoighe, Deputy Director General, SFI, and pupils Heidi Lucas Keogh and Brooke Tobin.

## Choose the path that's right for you

As Leaving Certificate exams come to an end, students can explore Further Education and Training courses on offer at [thisisfet.ie](http://thisisfet.ie). Leaving Certificate students looking for a route to university, direct entry into employment, or a pathway to deciding their choice of career are being encouraged to consider the 1500-plus Further Education and Training (FET) courses on offer through Education and Training Boards nationally.

According to the SOLAS, the State agency with responsibility for FET, the many and varied choices on offer in every county can support them in deciding about their next steps after school, while allowing them to stay close to home.

Many FET courses remain open for application until late summer, offering smart local learning options to prepare learners for the careers they want.

The benefits of FET courses highlighted by SOLAS include the following:

- FET courses are provided locally in every county throughout Ireland, delivered through the network of 16 Education and Training Boards, as well as other local providers. Localised provision enables learners who are not yet ready or able to move away from home to further their studies closer to home, without having to relocate or face long commutes.
- FET courses can provide a foundation for students in specific sectors before they commit to completing a higher education course such as a university degree. Examples include Pre-University Law, Pre-University Science and Pre-University Teaching.
- Research has shown that having a foun-

dation in FET helps your chances of getting a degree if you move into higher education.

- Many universities, colleges and Technological Universities have programmes in place to recognise FET qualifications as a route to entry. If a student completes a FET Post Leaving Cert (PLC) programme with good results and meets specific criteria, they have a good chance of securing a place on a university degree course.
- The recent announcement of new Tertiary Programmes the National Tertiary Office, a joint initiative between SOLAS and the HEA, will allow students to enter a degree programme that begins in further education and concludes in higher education. A select number of ETBs and HEIs across the country will take part in the co-delivery of the initial joint programmes.
- FET courses, at levels five and six on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), are available across 12 categories including education, agriculture and veterinary, information and communications technologies, engineering and construction, science and maths, business and law, social sciences and the arts.

Commenting, Paddy Lavelle, General Secretary at ETBI, said: "There have never been so many pathways open to students to their chosen careers after the Leaving Certificate. School leavers can choose from an expansive range of FET courses across areas such as engineering technology, cloud computing, cyber security, and science, to creative choices like games design, animal care and more. Local provision of post leaving certificate courses and traineeships in Ireland's sixteen Education and Training Boards across the country allows school leavers to continue their studies close to home." A young FET graduate is calling on Leaving Certificate students to consider FET courses for their next step.

Anna Ryan, Marketing Innovation and Technology (MIT) student at Blackrock Further Education Institute (BFEI) - after receiving her Leaving Cert results in 2022 - was unsure of her next steps. She was accepted to the Marketing Innovation and Technology (MIT) PLC course with Blackrock Further Education Institute (BFEI). The extra year helped to her to realise that marketing was the right career path for her and is hoping to be accepted onto a degree programme this year.



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 that it proposes 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.

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Roads, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Co. Wicklow or via email at [roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 18th July, 2023.



# Ukrainian Community Centre launched in Bray

Minister for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien TD, and the Ambassador of Ukraine to Ireland, Larysa Gerasko, joined more than 100 people from the local community in Bray on Thursday, 29th June, to celebrate the first year and official launch of Bray Area Partnership's Ukrainian Community Centre for Bray and North Wicklow.

The centre is located in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Hall in the Quinsborough Road and local members of the Ukrainian community were on hand to greet guests at the door with a traditional Ukrainian Korovai bread and salt welcoming ceremony. Highlights of the event included lively singing performances from children and adults dressed in bright traditional Ukrainian costume and delicious Ukrainian borscht, savouries and cakes served to guests.



Sophie Sirman and Anastasiia Kulyk at the Ukrainian Community Centre launch

Inside the hall, Ukrainian children proudly showed off their artwork in an exhibition called From Home to Home. Each child had created a drawing in the shape of their own region of Ukraine depicting their personal experience of their first year in Ireland and their journey from a home in Ukraine to finding a new home in Ireland. Minister Joe O'Brien and the children then stuck the last piece of the artwork onto a jigsaw map of Ukraine to complete this impressive art installation. Speaking at the event, Bray Area Partnership's chairperson Aoife Flynn Kennedy said that the word "community" really summed up what the centre was all about. She described how it had provided a warm and welcoming space over the past year for local Ukrainian people to meet, get support and information and take part in a wide range of activities. A local Ukrainian woman, Alina Vylka, then spoke about what the centre meant to her: "The war that ravaged my homeland, Ukraine, left me without a home, a job, and the comforts of my familiar life. Having lost everything



Minister Joe O'Brien cuts the ribbon to launch the Ukrainian Community Centre, with Ukrainian Ambassador Larysa Gerasko and Cathaoirleach of Bray Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy



Ukrainian people in traditional costume at the launch

dear to me, I found solace here, in beautiful Ireland. I would like to particularly acknowledge the Ukrainian Centre, which has become a hub of unity and support for me. Your boundless love for Ukraine and the multitude of programmes for children and adults have inspired me and helped restore my faith in the future."

Before cutting the ribbon to officially launch the centre, Minister Joe O'Brien said: "When you embarked on this endeavour a year ago, your vision was clear: to create a space that would serve as a vibrant hub for your Ukrainian community, a place where cultural heritage could be preserved, and new connections

forged. Today, as we look around this thriving Community Centre, you can proudly say that this mission has been accomplished." For more information on the Ukrainian Community Centre for Bray and North Wicklow see [www.brayareapartnership.ie](http://www.brayareapartnership.ie). This work is funded by

the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which is co-funded by the Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) Programme 2021-2027.



Minister Joe O'Brien, Mariana Yakubiv (Bray Area Partnership), Ukrainian Ambassador Larysa Gerasko and Cllr Erika Doyle getting a traditional welcome with some Ukrainian Korovai bread and salt.



Host family Tom, Barbara and Rebecca Taylor with Zlata Medianyik at the Ukrainian Community Centre launch



# Bray kickboxer wins Gold at European Games

**Bray's Amy Wall last week become the first Irish kickboxer to win a European Games Gold Medal after she won the decider in the 60kg Full Contact Class.**

Amy, a school teacher, delivered a superb performance to take gold, getting a 3-0 victory over Mariell Gaassan Straume of Norway. Amy looked comfortable throughout as she danced effortlessly around the ring and it appeared she was always destined for gold. The 22-year-old gave this reaction after: "It hasn't really sunk in yet, the Olympics, anything

under that banner has been a dream since I was a kid. I'm sure tomorrow I'll sit back and reflect, the emotions are racing right now.

"I'm happy with how that went, the girl I was fighting is a well-respected Norwegian. We've met before so I knew I was going to have it tough coming in, but the game plan worked and I executed everything that I needed to and I'm really happy with my performance."

Amy has an impressive sporting resume which also includes three WAKO World Titles, a WAKO European Silver and Bronze Medal.

Nine athletes from Ireland qualified for the European Games and after an impressive event from the entire team, five athletes went home with medals in hand. About her team Amy said, "It's just amazing to be part of such a good team. Everyone is supporting everyone and there's five medals coming back home, it's great. It's hopefully only the start for us under the Olympic banner and let's see what's next."

Up next for the Irish Kickboxers is the World Championships at the end of the year where they'll be looking to continue their success from these Games.



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# Wicklow poet shortlisted for prestigious international award

Wicklow poet Jane Clarke's third collection, *A Change in the Air*, is on the five-strong shortlist for the £10,000 Forward Prize for Best Collection, one of the most coveted and influential prizes for poetry in the UK and Ireland.

*A Change in the Air* was published by Bloodaxe Books at the end of May and was launched in Bridge Books, Wicklow as well as in Dublin and London.

Jane grew up on a farm in Roscommon and studied and worked in Dublin for thirteen years. She only began to write after moving to Glenmalur almost thirty years ago. Her highly acclaimed poetry reflects on how we are shaped by people, place and landscape and how our past informs our present. Many of the poems in *A Change in the Air* are rooted in Co. Wicklow, including those that honour the mining heritage in the three valleys of Glendasan, Glendalough and Glenmalur as well as poems inspired by the Avonmore river and the recent experience of lockdown in the uplands.

down in the uplands.

Bernardine Evaristo, well-known author and chair of the judging panel, said: "I think it's safe to say that poetry in the twenty-first century is flourishing like never before with such a broad range of poets writing from different backgrounds. As a jury we found ourselves drawn to poets who were moving poetry forwards in theme or form or both, who offered us emotional depth, imaginative fertility, re-readability and intellectual complexity, and, most importantly, who were writing fresh perspectives." The winners of this year's Forward Prizes will be announced at a ceremony in Leeds Playhouse, as part of Leeds 23, on 16 October.



Jane Clarke

## Wicklow Thoughts: an exhibition by Joaquín Martínez del Fresno

Wicklow Library, 17th - 31st July



Wicklow Lighthouse on the edge of the pier, 73 x 50 cm, Oil on canvas

Wicklow Thoughts is the title of an exhibition opening next week in Wicklow Library which will run until the end of July.

The exhibition by Joaquín Martínez del Fresno is inspired by Wicklow Town and features paintings of various locations around Wicklow Town.

Joaquín says he first started spending time in Wicklow Town when he was 15 years old as a student, and over the last 10 years has been visiting Wicklow Town with Spanish students.

Miguel Pablo Castilla López, artist and art teacher at the University of Seville, says of Joaquín's work: "An artist is characterized by having a personal vision of the surrounding world and being in continuous evolution to research and learn. And this is done very well by Joaquín Martínez del Fresno, who shows us a work plenty of beautiful landscapes of the Irish town of Wicklow. The sea, cliffs and paths introduce us into landscapes full of romantic nuances in terms of his vision and search for the untamed nature is around us, but also impressionist about his idea of the light coupled with a visceral and expressive brushstroke as well as an extraordinary use of the colours with evocative greys, greens, ochers and blues.

"Joaquín is not keen on the formal and realistic. Instead of it, he offers us an enclosure and unfinished atmosphere leaving to viewer the chance to think about it. Spectators will be left with the light, others with the atmosphere and others with shapes that seem to vanish into the skyline.

"Joaquín's work is purely intimist, intuitive and typical of its own aesthetic experience that leads to a proper use of the light and the colour that will not leave the viewer indifferent because his works, when you admire it, breathe to sea and evokes the lovely and green cliffs of this charming town.

## Mary Coughlan at Whale Theatre

Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd July, 8pm (doors 7pm). Tickets available at [www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie) or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to register on the waiting list.

After a phenomenal sold-out performance last year, Mary Coughlan returns to Greystones as part of the Whale Theatre's Summer programme for 2023.

Mary Coughlan's music career has been a roller coaster, one hell of a ride, and this Live & Kicking concert will reflect that, featuring all the songs that are close to Mary's heart and life. Mary Coughlan has often been described as the greatest female vocalist and interpreter of songs that Ireland has ever produced. Mary Coughlan proudly stands alongside the iconic giants of jazz on both sides of the Atlantic, Billie Holiday and Edith Piaf.

Mary Coughlan is the only singer these shores have produced to rival the greatest of European cabaret and American jazz club blues because of one thing: her unique voice. She is unique in blending the whisky-blurred, smoke-seared, husky notes and laconic wit of Billie Holiday and Peggy Lee and the line of deep, down and dirty blues singers back to Memphis Minnie and Bessie Smith with the sardonic, bitter-sweet defiance and despair of the Piaf. And Mary Coughlan delivers it all in a delicious and unapologetic Irish drawl, sceptical, rueful, mournful and melting, ardent for love, all in one voice which wraps itself around Cole Porter and Jerome Kern, Elvis Presley and Joy Division.

Mary is our greatest female singer because over twenty-five years and ten albums she's made the most grown-up, uncompromising, wholly personal and utterly universal music on either side of the Atlantic about what goes on between men and women. She has taken the classic standards of jazz balladry and the recent gems of rock and Irish song-writing, shaken them and offered them up anew. She sings in the voice of the wrong and wronged woman and she makes us think what it is men make of women and what women have to do to make do.



Mary Coughlan. Pic: Frank Miller



The sun shone down on Russborough House for two days of the Kaleidoscope Festival at Russborough House, Ireland's family focussed festival. Aside from plenty of music there were plenty of activities to keep children of all ages occupied, from baby yoga and storytelling with Johnny Magory, to wall climbing, ziplining and archery.



# Wicklow artist overcomes barriers to showcase artwork at national exhibition

Elizabeth Hendrick, fondly known as Libby, is a charming 75-year-old artist residing at Ardeen Chesire Home in Shillelagh, who has overcome barriers to showcase her remarkable artwork on a national level.

Libby is one of ten artists carefully selected from around the country as part of the Connecting Artists 2023 programme, which culminates in an exhibition of their art at the renowned Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI) in Dublin, taking place from Sunday 16th to Tuesday 18th of July.

Connecting Artists is a 10-week online programme designed by Miriam Spollen, the founder of Connections Arts Centre, a social enterprise dedicated to connecting the disability community through the Arts. Miriam created this online programme for visual artists nationwide with intellectual disabili-

ties who wish to develop their creative practice.

Miriam says: "This programme provides an immersive, supportive, and interactive environment for artists with intellectual disabilities, empowering them to develop their creative practice and to hone their natural talents. It provides a safe space for artists to explore their art and techniques and learn from each other. It also prepares them for exhibiting and selling their work.

The programme would not be possible without our ten wonderful mentors who volunteered their time to support each artist, and the RCSI Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Unit, for providing a platform to highlight the exceptional talents of these ten artists."

Despite facing the challenges of an intellectual disability, Libby is a social and musically inclined individual who revels in socialising, spending time with family, and gardening. A proud supporter of Wexford's GAA hurling team, Libby's roots trace back to Clohamon, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford.

Libby has been painting since 2015 when a woman



Libby Hendrick

called Orla Callaghan started teaching weekly art classes in Ardeen. She primarily works with watercolours and acrylics, occasionally incorporating coloured pencils to initiate her compositions. She finds joy in depicting birds, nature, and the intricacies of butterflies, which present their own set of challenges.

Libby's artwork has graced two exhibitions, one of which was held at the Courthouse Arts Centre in Tinahely. Moreover, she was delighted to sell one of her paintings during the exhibition. Libby has also participated in the art compe-

tition at the Tinahely Show, where she earned prizes for her artistic creations. Furthermore, her artwork adorns the walls of Ardeen Chesire Home, a testament to her talent.

Libby's participation in the Connecting Artists programme allows her to exhibit her artwork proudly, demonstrating that her disability does not hinder her creativity. She eagerly anticipates showcasing her work in the RCSI Dublin and cherishes the opportunity to exchange ideas with fellow artists.

"I want to prove to myself that I have the ability and skill to overcome anything. At the end of the

day, I can confidently say, 'I did that, I painted that, I never gave up, I kept going'. I look forward to the exhibition day and to sharing my artwork with the world," says Libby.

Miriam adds: "We are thrilled for Libby and all the participating artists of the 2023 programme and to see their fantastic artwork exhibiting at a national level. The response from the general public, both business and community has been brilliant. We are also delighted to know that the exhibit will be showcasing in Belfast and no doubt in more counties around the country during the year.

"Our aim is to continue the Connecting Artists programme for years to come and to support a new cohort of artists every year. We are

always interested to explore partnership opportunities with organisations that share our vision of promoting inclusivity and empowering artists with intellectual disabilities. If there is interest in supporting our Connecting Artists programme and making a meaningful difference in the lives of these artists, we would be delighted to discuss potential sponsorships or funding opportunities."

Do not miss the chance to visit the exhibit and see Samuelis artwork. Artwork will be available to purchase throughout the event and online. Entry is FREE, but booking is essential. Book your place now at <https://www.connectionsartscentre.ie/connecting-artists-programme-1>. For

more information visit, [www.connectionsartscentre.ie](http://www.connectionsartscentre.ie)



Sweet Bird, by Libby Hendrick

## Wind: an Exhibition by Andrew Freeland

Signal Arts Centre, Monday 24th July to Sunday 6th August

The act of strolling is the role that the flâneur holds within the world. While remaining hidden, lost among the crowd. During the act of strolling the flâneur accumulates knowledge of the urban space.

A Photograph taken within the confines of the street reflects the feelings from the photographer. So an unintentional self-portrait can be created and hidden within the imagery.

Wind is a Photographic Exhibition that will open from 24th July to 6th August. The artist Andrew Freeland is an IADT Graduate, former Staff Artist at Signal and is a local Wicklow Artist. The underlying element for the exhibition will be exploring the flâneur of street photography and other new elements. Andrew invites you to critic and enjoy his work while it is being hosted by the Signal Arts Centre.

"Freeland's montage of street photographs had a terrific, gritty,

open-ended narrative quality. Working in Dublin and Paris, he became a flâneur, absorbing and capturing the energy, drift and flow of urban life and character." (Aidan Dunne, The Irish Times)

When you start a project that has elements of new and old work, certain questions you must ask. How it is different from before and how it is the same? Andrew's show will have three different elements. The Imagery still retains traditional elements of street photography as a flâneur and moves into more colourful burnt and overexposed images and some new imagery. His showcase will also include a series of photographic books.



Stoneybatter by Andrew Freeland

## PLANNING

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Intention to apply for permission and retention as set out below.

Planning permission is sought by Packaging Laundry Ltd for removal of existing single-storey joinery workshop building and adjacent yard, and for construction in its place of new nine meter high single-storey storage/processing building, on site at former home of Wicklow Timber and Joinery Ltd, Wurtzburg Avenue, Boghall Road, Bray, Co Wicklow (Eircode A98WD37). This site is immediately adjacent and adjoining the existing home of the applicant company, Packaging Laundry Ltd, at Unit C, Oldcourt Business Park, Wurtzburg Avenue, Boghall Road, Bray, Co Wicklow (Eircode A98P6N3), and the application includes retention of an external cylindrical water storage tank, and minor items of external plant. It also includes for retention of an existing lean-to building which houses a chipping machine, and retention of an existing wall-mounted wash-area canopy. Other minor associated works will include the provision of markings for car parking, markings for a turning circle, and markings for loading areas, and gates to the external storage areas. Signage, too, is included as illustrated. While the proposed building is intended for storage and display purposes only, it should be noted that Packaging Laundry Ltd do hold a Waste Licence (EPA Waste Licence under the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended) on the existing Packaging Laundry site immediately adjacent. Finally, it should be noted that the existing Wicklow Joinery road-entrance from Wurtzburg Avenue will be closed-over, and the proposed building will be accessed via the existing Packaging Laundry apron within Oldcourt Business Park.

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

#### Further Information

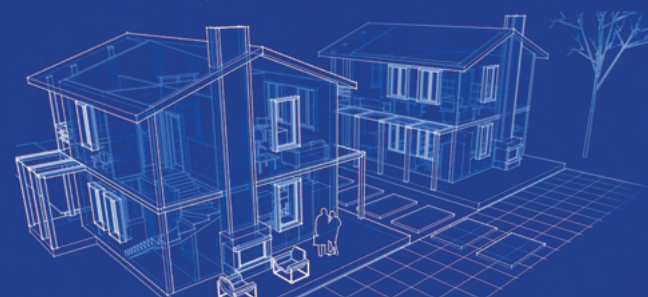
Niamh and Mark Bownes have applied for planning permission for development of a new build house at Raheen, Hawkins Lane, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. Planning Reference: 23/60008 refers.

The development will consist of the construction of a new two storey, four bedroom detached dwelling house with rooflights within the pitched roof, plus single storey detached garage to the side, that will be facilitated by the creation of a new vehicular access and new driveway off Hawkins Lane, as well as all associated ancillary works, including underground attenuation tank and all site development works. The development is located within the Burnaby Architectural Conservation Area.

In this regard note that Significant Further Information has been furnished to the Planning Authority and is available for inspection or purchase at the offices of the Planning Authority at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, during its public opening hours, and that a submission or observation in relation to the Further Information may be made to the Authority in writing and on payment of the prescribed fee (€20.00) within 2 weeks of the date of receipt of the newspaper notice and site notice (within 5 weeks in the case of an application accompanied by an E.I.S.) by the Authority and no further fee is required where a valid submission or observation has already been made in respect of this planning application.

## ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

Reach the widest readership for your planning notices  
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Call **01 286 9111** or email  
[paoline@localtimes.ie](mailto:paoline@localtimes.ie)





# Free e-waste and battery recycling event

Wicklow householders are being urged to bring their batteries, electrical, and electronic waste to a free collection event to help the county meet national e-waste recycling targets for 2023.

The event, hosted by WEEE Ireland in partnership with Lidl, will take place on Thursday July 13th at the Lidl car park, Blacklion Manor Road, Greystones from 10am-4pm. All household items

with a plug or a battery will be accepted free of charge, including old washing machines, TVs, toasters and kettles, electronic tools and toys, cables, IT equipment, mobile phones, remote controls, batteries, including farm fence batteries, and even watches.

"In Wicklow, and across Ireland, we are buying more electrical goods than ever - with people purchasing an average 25kg per head in 2022 compared to 22kg in 2021," said WEEE Ireland CEO Leo Donovan.

"Shopping stats show a surge in spend on new electrical devices like mobile phones, computers, small kitchen appliances and white goods. With old items still lying around many households we want to offer the opportunity to recycle these for free.

"People in Wicklow have contributed greatly to e-waste recycling every year, with 1,121 tonnes of electrical waste collected in the county in 2022, and we want to

encourage that trend."

7.22kg of e-waste was recycled per person in Wicklow last year - falling short of the national average of 10.03kg per person.

WEEE Ireland warns that the nation needs to meet a forthcoming EU target to recycle at least 15% of our annual consumption of critical raw materials from e-waste.

"82% of all material that we collect is recovered for use again in manufacturing through both indigenous operators and specialist processors in Europe," said Mr. Donovan. Most end-of-life products contain metals and minerals in higher concentrations than primary resources. These stocks of resources are the urban mines of the future, so our recycling efforts can have a significant impact on the environment."

In 2022, the equivalent of 216,157 tonnes of CO2 emissions were avoided by recycling e-waste through the WEEE Ireland Scheme as opposed to landfilling. That is the equivalent of the annual carbon consumption of 4,323



hectares of trees.

WEEE Ireland accounts for over two thirds of all national waste electrical and electronics collection activity on behalf of 1,300 producer members.

These free events are in partnership with Lidl.

"Recycling e-waste is incredibly beneficial for both the environment and the economy," said Mr. Donovan.

"Together, we are diverting waste from landfill, recovering raw materials for reuse and

ensuring hazardous materials are safely and responsibly disposed of. We look forward to working with Wicklow householders to hopefully recycle a record-breaking amount of electronic waste in 2023."

## RECRUITMENT



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## Woof in the Woods

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30th June - 26th August

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind are encouraging people to get involved in their Woof in the Woods Challenge this summer, in association with the Native Woodland Trust and taking place in Coillte forests across the country.

The Challenge aims to raise funds to provide independence and mobility to those who are vision impaired and the families of children with autism AND for every €100 raised a tree will be planted.

How can you join the challenge? It's easy.

- Sign up via [www.guide-dogs.ie](http://www.guide-dogs.ie) Entry is €5.
- Decide on your person-

al/team sponsorship challenge - Can you cover 100km or maybe take on 10 Coillte woodland walks? You decide.

- Share your sponsorship link with friends, family, colleagues, and start your sponsorship journey.

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# Irish eCommerce Awards and AIB Merchant Services join forces for a three-year partnership

The Irish eCommerce Awards has announced its renewed partnership with AIB Merchant Services. This collaboration will extend over three years.



Marie Cronin, Kevin Traynor and Louise Phelan

The highly anticipated 2023 Irish eCommerce Awards, powered by AIB Merchant Services, are set to take place on Friday 22 September at the iconic Round Room at The Mansion House in Dublin. The occasion will bring together the brightest minds and outstanding talents from the Irish eCommerce industry to celebrate their remarkable achievements.

With the aim of fostering innovation and recognising exceptional contributions, the Irish eCommerce Awards will honour industry leaders across 25 categories, celebrating the very best eCommerce websites, agencies, service providers, and individuals in the industry.

The 2023 award programme features two new

categories: 'Travel & Tourism eCommerce Website of the Year' and the 'Women in eCommerce Award'. The winners will be selected by a distinguished panel of judges, comprising industry experts and luminaries.

"AIB Merchant Services has a long and proud tradition in the area of powering eCommerce payments and is proud to embark on this exciting & culturally important partnership with the Irish eCommerce Awards.

This collaboration underpins our stated ambition to support the growth and development of the eCommerce industry in Ireland. We are confident that the awards ceremony will serve as a platform to recognise the exceptional talent and



Orlaith Matthews and Denise O'Shea at the Wicklow Pride Parade in Wicklow Town.



Mícheál Ó Gruagáin, Louise Phelan, John Hoolahan and Kevin Traynor

innovation within the vibrant Irish eCommerce community," said John Hoolahan, Marketing Director, AIB Merchant Services.

The Irish eCommerce Awards Founder, Kevin Traynor expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "We are thrilled to have AIB Merchant Services as our partner for the next three years. The team's expertise and support will help us elevate the Irish eCommerce Awards to new heights and provide an unforgettable experience for all attendees."

Furthermore, the Irish

eCommerce Awards is delighted to announce that the Society of St.

Vincent de Paul (SVP) will serve as the charity partner for the evening. SVP is a renowned charity organisation dedicated to alleviating poverty and supporting those in need across the island of Ireland. Building on the success of last year's event, where nearly €4000 was raised for SVP, with the proceeds split between the East and North Regions of the Society in Ireland.

East Region President, Marie Cronin said, "SVP is the largest voluntary

charitable organisation in Ireland with over 11,000 volunteers and members. It offers a practical approach to dealing with poverty via a unique system of home visitation, its main area of work. We are pleased to be associated with the Irish eCommerce Awards again in 2023. We are familiar with the generosity of the nominees and attendees on the awards night and hope we can rely on their support again this year as cost of living pressures continue to impact the families we visit."

Award entries close on Monday 24th July.

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