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Tuesday 29th August 2023 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

GARDA STATIONS ARE SAFE

Speculation was mounting last week in several County Wicklow towns that they are in line to have their Garda stations closed.

Garda Commissioner Drew Harris has ordered Gardai to return to their pre-Covid rosters. This was 5 shifts of ten hours but changed to 4 twelve hour shifts during Covid. Basically, four days on and four days off.

Greystones councillor Gerry Walsh (former Garda Sergeant) said he had heard the rumours that Greystones Garda Station was to close and said there must be a pause in re-introducing the 5 shift rosters.

"The resources simply are not there, what with

retirements, gardai leaving the force and the slow recruitment and training of new members it could be two years before we are up to strength, he said.

Jennifer Whitmore TD expressed grave concern at recent media reports that the Greystones Garda station may be closed down, with personnel moved to Bray Station due to staffing constraints.

Deputy Whitmore said "The media reports that indicate that there

may be a possible closure of Greystones Garda station due to staffing constraints are incredibly worrying. The Greystones area has seen a progressive reduction in the number of Gardai over the last number of years, particularly community gardai. That reduction, coupled with the lack of investment in the station itself, would appear to be providing the rationale for the reallocation of remaining Gardai to the Bray station.

"This absolutely



Aine Kinch celebrates getting seven H1s in the Leaving Cert with her mum Niamh, at St. Mary's College in Arklow. Pic: Michael Kelly

cannot happen. The populations of Greystones, Kilcoole, Delgany and Newcastle continue to grow strongly, and Government should be putting in place more Garda resources to meet the needs of these towns, not less."

However, a statement from Minister Simon Harris TD last Friday said "It has been confirmed to me by the Minister for Justice that there are no plans to close Greystones Garda Station. In addition to this An Garda Siochana confirmed to my colleague, the Justice Minister that Garda management wish to actually invest in and refurbish the station.

"Not only must Greystones Garda Station remain open, it needs to be expanded to provide fit for purpose facilities for Gardai stationed there and for the needs of our growing

community. Our local Gardai in County Wicklow must be supported in their excellent work. During my time as Justice Minister, I took a number of steps to try and do this including producing a new law to increase the sentence for anyone who assaults a member of An Garda Siochana or attacks their vehicle.

"As the number of new Gardai emerging from Templemore College increases in the months ahead, it is really important that we see an increase in Garda numbers throughout County Wicklow and this is particularly merited considering the increase in the population in our county.

"I will continue to work to support members of the Gardai in our county and in my role in Government. I am very much aware of the ongoing roster issue in An

Garda Siochana and I really hope that meaningful engagement can

take place to find a solution that works for Garda members and

works for the policing needs of our communities."

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City of Dublin

Wicklow coffee lovers urged to host fundraiser for hospice

Domhnall Gleeson is urging people across Wicklow to host coffee mornings in September to help raise €2million for 'extraordinary' hospice services.

The Hollywood star is supporting Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice, a fundraising drive which has generated €43.2million since 1992.

He joined Hospice hosts and volunteers on August 2nd, and asked everyone in Ireland to host or support this year's event on September 21st.

Both of Gleeson's grandparents - his father Brendan's parents - spent their final days in St Francis Hospice in Dublin.

"My grandma (Pat) was only there for a few weeks and that was my first experience of being around a Hospice," said the Harry Potter and Star Wars actor, 40.

"I was incredibly close to her and I was struck by the atmosphere of care and kindness. She had a rough journey before she got there - and all of a sudden, that difficult road seemed less punishing to travel."

He recalled thinking she seemed as 'safe and cared for' as possible.

"It was such a relief," he said. "In terms of my granddad (Francis), we had been looking after him for a long time, probably about a year, and didn't think he was going to last that long in Hospice, but he was there for months. The care was extraordinary, but he had a new lease of life, it (Hospice care) gives their body the care it needs, and makes them feel special."

He told how Francis constantly joked with staff who, he said, see beyond the illness or life-limiting condition.

"There's a focus on creating a connection and patients are not just a problem to be solved on the way to the next problem along the corridor. Each person's journey is different, and each one matters to the people working there."

"I don't know how they do it; there is an incredible giving of oneself. So I am asking everyone in Wicklow on September 21st, or whenever suits them, to organise, support or donate to a coffee morning, wherever it might be held."

Now in its 31st year, organisers hope to raise €2million in 2023, returning the countrywide fundraiser



Actor Domhnall Gleeson with Allison Ryder, Fundraising, Events and Campaigns Coordinator at Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services in Wicklow

to pre-Covid levels and bringing the total raised since its inception beyond the €45million mark.

Together for Hospice, The National Hospice Movement, represents 26 Hospice and specialist palliative home care providers supporting patients and their families. Funds raised locally stay local and go back into each Hospice service, helping to pay for medical and general staff, palliative care beds, home care visits, specialist equipment and new hospice builds. Communities right across Wicklow are urged to simply gather a group on September 21st to help raise much needed funds to support the work of Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services, Wicklow.

Mary Flanagan of Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services in Wicklow said: "We are delighted

Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice, which is one of Ireland's longest and most loved fundraisers, is now entering its fourth decade of raising funds in support of Hospice in-patient and community services around Ireland. It is a chance to celebrate our many coffee morning hosts across the county, who are an incredible testament to the dedication and committed nature of Hospice supporters in local communities. This ongoing support is invaluable and funds vital services and quality initiatives enhancing care for patients living with a life limiting illness."

Register to host a coffee morning at hospicecoffeemorning.ie or call 0818 995 996. You can also make a donation at hospicecoffeemorning.ie /donate



Some of the members of the newly formed Wicklow Ukrainian Choir Julia Ivanova, Hulnara Poda, Tamara Batashova and Natalia Kadnychanska

Ukraine's Independence Day celebrated in Wicklow

The excitement is building in Wicklow town and surrounding areas when The Ukraine community in Wicklow Town along with their Irish friends celebrated Ukraine's Independence Day on Sunday 27th August. The actual date of Independence Day was 24th August.

Independence Day of Ukraine is the main state holiday in modern Ukraine celebrated throughout the world in commemoration of the Declaration of Independence of 1991.

In Wicklow the celebrations took place in the surroundings of the Ecology Centre at the Dominican College.

The entertainment consisted of the very first performance of the newly formed choir Voices of Ukraine. There was also a display of Irish dancing plus a typical Ukrainian dance demonstration. Ukrainian people travelled from far and wide for the celebrations.

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Roundwood Creative Hub

The Roundwood Creative Hub is a new craft retail space providing crafters with an outlet to display and sell their hand crafted products to the public. Beginning on September 3rd, it will take place on the first Sunday of each month in Roundwood Parish Hall, 11am to 4pm. There are over 20 crafters booked in to the venue currently and there will be refreshments and seating available. Entry is free and there is free parking.

Roundwood ukulele players

Roundwood Ukulele Players will resume strumming and singing on Tuesday 19th September in Roundwood Parish Hall. The ukulele class is for Adult Beginners and is open to everyone and anyone, but mostly to those who would love to sing and learn a new instrument but have never taken the plunge before! Contact Linda on 087-9729956 to enquire about the morning or evening classes.

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'Critical maintenance work needed on Dargle Flood Protection scheme'

Sinn Fein TD John Brady has called on Wicklow County Council to ensure that critical maintenance work is carried out on the Dargle River Flood protection scheme. He made the call following concerns expressed to him by local residents that large trees and other objects washed down the river are acting as a dam potentially leading to flooding upstream from it.

The materials have been caught at the debris trap at the Slang area on the Dargle, adjacent to the Rivervale apartments.

Deputy Brady said "I have been contacted by a number of local residents from the Dargle area of Little Bray expressing concerns about the length of time it's taking Wicklow Council to clear large fallen trees and other objects that are acting as a dam on the Dargle river at the debris trap adjacent to the Rivervale apartments. The fallen trees have been carried down the Dargle river and are trapped at the slang area.

"The debris trap at the slang was installed as part of the €46m River Dargle Flood Defence Scheme. So, it's good to see that it's doing its job and ensuring that large fallen trees and other objects are stopped from being washed downstream and getting caught at the Fran O'Toole Bridge. However, locals

are concerned at the amount of time that it's taking to have the debris removed from the trap.

They fear that the debris is acting as a dam and that it will lead to flooding upstream from it.

"The Dargle broke its banks causing major flooding in Bray in 1905, 1947 and 1961. The last major flood due to Hurricane Charlie in 1986. The €46m Dargle flood-defence scheme came about following extensive campaigning by the community, it was designed to provide protection against a 1-in-100-year fluvial flood and 1-in-200-year tidal flood.

"It is concerning that as we mark the 37th anniversary of Hurricane Charley hitting the area that local residents are worried about the area flooding again.

"Wicklow County Council must immediately ensure that the fallen trees are removed from the debris trap at Rivervale and that regular maintenance work is promptly carried out in the area to ensure that the overall flood protection scheme which was completed in October 2017 can be effective as it was designed to be."



Deputy Brady at the Debris Trap which is located at the Slang area of the Dargle River

Progress being made on N11 Park & Ride facilities

Green TD for Wicklow Deputy Steven Matthews has welcomed progress on the first of three Park & Ride facilities for the N11 which is going ahead at Fassaroe with the planning application now open for public submissions.

"The provision of park and ride facilities with dedicated bus corridors and new frequent bus services will provide better public transport options and reduce congestion on the N11," said Deputy Matthews.

"There will be almost 400 parking spaces, including disability spaces and lots of dedicated EV charging spots. It is a well laid out plan, which provides good shelter and secure park-

ing for users to avail of a new 20-minute peak time bus service.

"The new bus service will be frequent and reliable as it uses dedicated bus corridors on the N11 and the Bus Connects corridors which are also going through planning and consultation from Bray to City Centre.

"This is the type of transport infrastructure and facilities that have been needed for many years to reduce conges-

tion and offer an alternative for some car users. There will always be people who must drive or want to drive but for others, it is vital that we supply frequent buses and trains. The dedicated N11 bus corridors are proceeding, the first of the Park & Ride sites is designed and in for planning permission, there are many new rural bus services across Wicklow, new direct bus services between Wicklow, Bray and Dublin, a new late evening rail service and the DART to Wicklow Town is making good progress.

"This is proper transport planning. There are still many Wicklow politicians pushing antiquated transport ideas for third lanes, tunnels and new roads in complete ignorance of climate change and the urgent need to reduce transport emissions. Their ideas and obsession with roads are of a different era but my priority, which I am



Steven Matthews TD

delivering on is for good reliable affordable public transport for those that want it and a safe N11 with reduced congestion, bus corridors and park and ride facilities.

One of my main objectives as a TD is to improve transport in Wicklow and I will deliver more rural and town bus services, safer cycling and walking routes, Safe Routes to School, the DART to Wicklow Town and improved rail services on the Arklow line as long as I represent the people of Wicklow," concluded Deputy Matthews



The N11



Naomi Deveruex and Hayley Doyle check their Leaving Cert results online at St. Mary's College, Arklow

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Fresh insights and guidance to protect pristine waters



Confluence of Glendasan and Avonmore Rivers downstream of Ballard Bridge, Laragh. Photo by Anna Rymaszewicz / Steve Davis, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)

New insights into the characteristics of Ireland's most pristine waters have been published, along with a comprehensive set of measures to reverse the deterioration of these rivers and streams.

The Framework of Measures and Best Practice Guidance for High Status Objective Water Bodies was published by the Waters of LIFE Project, a €20 million EU-funded project managed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The Waters of LIFE project's purpose is to reverse the deterioration of Ireland's most pristine waters, in six catchment sites in Clare, Cork, Galway, Roscommon, Kerry and Wicklow, working with landowners, local authorities and communities to make improvements to the water quality of each catchment. High status or pristine waters are in close to pristine condition, rich in biodiversity and show little or no impact from human activity.

Ireland is one of a small number of EU member states that still has a number of high status water bodies. The report comprises a comprehensive set of measures to address pressures on water quality from a range of sectors considered to be impacting on these types of rivers, which are often located in remote, rural parts of the country. A series of sector specific

annexes for agriculture, forestry, peat extraction, quarrying and domestic wastewater treatment systems was also published, listing the measures available to deal with pressures from that sector and ranking them by effectiveness.

The Waters of LIFE team, based out of Croom, Co Limerick, will begin to roll out and test the measures contained in this report in the five demonstration catchments for the project, using the report's insights to inform the best measures suited to each water body's needs. Participating landowners including foresters will be able to avail of support from a voluntary Results-Based Payments Scheme linking higher environmental quality with higher payments.

The report has revealed that the majority of high status objective rivers, outside the southwest of Ireland, are in areas dominated by poorly drained soils and occur as headwater streams located in the upper reaches of a catchment close to the river source. The sectors that have the greatest impact on high status objective water bodies are agriculture, forestry, extractive industries and domestic wastewater treatment systems.

Changes to the physical structure of rivers, fine sediment accumulation and over enrichment with nutrients are the major issues causing high status rivers to be at risk.

ReWild Wicklow group granted charity status

Community environmental group ReWild Wicklow is the latest organisation to be granted full charity status in Wicklow.

The volunteer group was established in early 2022 and, after a rigorous process of screening, it was added to the register of charities last week. The mission of the new charity is to monitor, protect, enhance and increase native habitats in Wicklow so that it can support a vast, biodiverse, balanced ecosystem of historical flora and fauna. They put a strong emphasis on citizen science and people power, by educating the public and encouraging volunteers to get involved with their work.

"It was a long and thorough process but we were delighted to get the news from the Charities Regulator," said secretary Enya Alvey who has a background in law. "Already our group has partnered with 14 other public, private and NGO conservation organisations working in Wicklow. We have recruited over 1,000 volunteers onto our database using social media and local news outlets. With these volunteers we have organised 50 activity days throughout 2022 and 2023. These volunteer days have included tree plant-

ing (over 5,000 trees now planted), peatland restoration (over 200 small timber and stone dams now built), vegetation management, seed sowing, erecting deer fencing, nest box building, litter cleanups and setting up camera traps. Now getting this full registered charity status will open up even more doors for us and avenues of support, particularly from company CSR programmes."

As well as Enya, the charity trustees include brothers Danny of Newtown and Simon of Rathdrum, Jeremy Casey of Enniskerry, Andrew Stringer of Newcastle, Catherine Devitt of Glendalough, Aoife Connaughton of Bray and Maria O'Loughlin of Laragh. In addition to these trustees there are many more core members working on projects in support of the organisation's objectives and they have plenty more initiatives planned for the future.

To find out more about Wicklow's newest environmental charity, or to join their volunteer list, visit rewild-wicklow.ie



The ReWild Wicklow volunteers pictured during one of their clean-ups

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Funding for Kindlestown Woods

Coillte is set to spend €6,912 on trail maintenance and signage for Kindlestown Woods outside Delgany, it's been announced.

Welcoming the funding Cllr Stephen Stokes stated: "Kindlestown Woods is an amazing place. There are lovely paths to follow, and it is a haven for biodiversity. With the Cliff Walk currently out of action, it is even more important that we have alternatives available."

The 2023 funding announcement is part of a package of maintenance funding to be spent around County Wicklow at just over €122,000. Cllr Stokes believes that more signage is welcome in Kindlestown Woods. He added: "From my own walking experience in the Kindlestown Woods, extra signage would be useful. This will help to boost the experience of all walkers."

Cllr Stokes says he wants to see more investment in walking trails. He concluded: "We have a growing population in County Wicklow. We need more infrastructure, but we also need to keep an eye on additional outdoor pursuits. Developing eco tourism can also help to create employment opportunities in a sustainable way. As such I support investing in Wicklow trails, such as Kindlestown Woods."



Cllr Stephen Stokes at Kindlestown Woods



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nity to visit the college and speak with course coordinators about your options. You can also visit their website and apply online at www.scfe.ie.

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National Learning Network supporting students

Sean (not his real name) left school early. His goal was to get an apprenticeship as a plumber. As with most apprenticeships in the trades, he had to fulfil the following:

- Education to at least Junior Cert level in 5 subjects, including Maths
- Safe Pass certification
- Work experience with a plumbing contractor
- Manual handling certification
- Colour Vision test

Sean, through a friend, heard about National Learning Network's JobStart Training Program. As well

as preparing students for employment, JobStart supports students into apprenticeships.

During his 12 months in JobStart, Sean fulfilled all the above criteria, including a QQI level 4 award and a one-year work experience placement with a national plumbing contractor. Sometimes, getting to the sites

involved a lot of travel - from Bray to the Naas Rd and later to Arklow, working on a large construction project.

Through hard work and determination, Sean completed his education with National Learning Network, and his employer then signed him onto a 4-year apprenticeship.

Colette O'Loan, Training Instructor, JobStart, said: "At NLN Bray, on the JobStart training programme, we create a personalised

employment and education plan for each student, as with Sean, and ensure they are supported in the development of that plan.

Alison Gapert, Area Manager Wicklow, said "As well as apprenticeships, students who have attended NLN's supported training courses have progressed to universities, colleges of further education, and paid employment, getting jobs in organisations including AsIAm, eir, Facebook, and some have even become full circle by being employed

within NLN"

We know first-hand the difference an inclusive environment can make to a person with additional support needs. Hundreds of students aged 16 to 65 have come through our college and have had the opportunity to upskill, build confidence and make a fresh start. For many, school didn't work out, or, as an adult, they were reluctant to engage with further education facilities. However, at NLN, our diverse staff team will give each

person the individualised and holistic support they need to achieve whatever they want from their course.

At NLN, we empower people to undertake positive learning pathways, and our programmes' flexibility can make all the difference to a person.

National Learning Network has a range of courses for job seekers and those who want to resume their education and get qualifications.



Students receiving their Leaving Cert results at St.Mary's College in Arklow on Friday

ASTI and ISSU congratulate Leaving Cert students

ASTI President Geraldine O'Brien has congratulated all students who received their Leaving Cert results on Friday, August 25th.

"Today is a day to celebrate the beginning of the next phase of your lives," said Ms O'Brien. "The knowledge, skills and experience you have gained as a result of progressing from first year through to the Leaving Cert will serve you in many ways as you pursue your goals as a young adult."

Approximately 62,000 students sat Leaving Cert exams this June. The ASTI President said every young person who got their results has their own unique combination of talents, interests, skills and learnings.

"Regardless of your results today, know that your future holds many opportunities. I urge you to take time to consider all of your options in the days and weeks ahead."

Ms O'Brien said this year's Leaving Cert students were significantly impacted by the pandemic: "This year's Leaving Cert students experienced school closures, mask wearing in class, cold temperatures in schools, and they never got to sit their Junior Cycle exams. Fortunately, these students benefited from a return to normality, including the certainty of a fair and transparent Leaving Cert exams pro-

cess. A key learning from the pandemic is that we must protect the integrity of the Leaving Cert. Any changes must be built upon fairness for students and trust in the system."

Also speaking on Friday, Shari Irfan, President of the ISSU (Irish Second-Level Students Union) said: "The achievements of Leaving Certificate students of 2023 are a testament to their dedication and hard work. The ISSU is immensely proud of the resilience they have shown, and we have no doubt that they will continue to make positive contributions to our society. As we move forward, let us remember that these results are not just a reflection of academic excellence but also of their growth as individuals."

Heather Doyle, ISSU Education Officer said: "The stressful journey of the leaving cert is finally coming to a close and massive congratulations for coming this far. It has been a particularly unique second-level experience with the Covid-19 pandemic however, if you have any questions or want to talk to a professional the leaving cert helpline is a great resource to utilise."

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New bus route for Blessington Community College

Bus Eireann will be introducing a new bus route from the Manor Kilbride area to Blessington Community College under the School Transport Scheme for the new school year.

Welcoming the news, Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore said "Several parents from the Manor Kilbride community contacted my office asking for assistance in making the case to Bus Eireann for this much needed school bus route. I am delighted that we were able to help with this and we have been informed by Bus Eireann that they intend to have this route in operation for the new school year and will be contacting families directly about tickets.

"The introduction of this new bus route is great

news for the families and students living in Manor Kilbride. At present Manor Kilbride is not serviced by public transport and parents were having to drive their children to school. This new bus route will not only be of benefit to the local community but will also see a reduction in the number of cars making that school journey every morning and so have a positive impact on the local environment too.

"Deirdre McCormack, our Social Democrats Local Area Representative for West Wicklow, is continuing to work with local

families and Bus Eireann regarding ticket eligibility so that as many local students as possible can benefit from this new school bus route," added Deputy Whitmore.

Ms McCormack echoed Deputy Whitmore's welcome to the introduction of the new school bus route and commended the parents involved in petitioning for the new route for their determination.

Ms McCormack commented: "This is fantastic news for the community in Manor Kilbride and especially the students who will now be able to

get to and from school independently of their parents. I am delighted that we were able to work with the families involved who have been calling for the introduction of this bus service for several years and who have worked together as a community to make it happen. I hope that all Blessington Community College students in the Manor Kilbride area will be able to benefit from this new bus route and I will continue to work with Bus Eireann on this issue."

In conclusion Deputy Whitmore remarked, "Every year I am contacted by a huge number of families from across Wicklow asking for help with the School Transport Scheme. This shows the huge demand for access to school bus places and the urgent need to expand this scheme so that every child has a sustainable way to get to school.

"If you are currently having any difficulties accessing the school transport scheme, I would like to hear from you. Please contact my office at Jennifer.whitmore@oireachtas.ie."

Also welcoming the news, Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris said "Over the past number of



Currently Manor Kilbride is not serviced by public transport

months, I have been in touch with a number of local residents in Manor Kilbride in regard to school transport. It quickly became clear to me that a new school transport bus route was very much needed in this area

after discussing this issue with local parents. "I am delighted to be able to say that after working closely with Bus Eireann, a new school bus route will be established this coming September. Bus Eireann will shortly

begin the procurement process to secure a suitable vehicle for this route and I cannot wait to see this process completed. "Accessible and convenient school transport makes life so much easier for parents and families

and it is fantastic to see the scheme being extended further into County Wicklow, and I will keep in close contact with Bus Eireann to see what other opportunities are available for servicing new areas all across our county."



Deputy Jennifer Whitmore and Social Democrats Local Area Representative for West Wicklow, Deirdre McCormack

Whitmore calls for urgent expansion of the School Transport Scheme

Deputy Jennifer Whitmore, Social Democrats TD and Spokesperson for Children has called on the Government to expand the School Transport as a matter of urgency.

At present the School Transport Scheme operates within very narrow parameters. For a child to qualify for a ticket they must live more than 3.2km from their Primary school or 4.8km from their Secondary school. The child must also be attending the school geographically closest to their family home with certain exceptions made for schools of a particular ethos, religion or language. If a child does not meet these requirements, they may be eligible for a 'concessionary' ticket which is issued at the discretion of Bus Eireann if there are places available on the school bus route.

"Every year from June onwards I have a huge number of parents contacting my office asking for help with the School Transport Scheme and every year we are dealing with the same problems. It is an annual and predictable School Transport Crisis and it is time for the Government to take action and resolve it," explained Deputy Whitmore.

"One of the issues that we have seen arise again and again are when children who had received concessionary tickets in previous years are not offered a place on the school bus for the new school year due to an increase in students deemed eligible for tickets applying for that school bus route. Families are being told with very short notice that their children don't have a way to get to school. One family in West Wicklow was told that their 10-year-old did not have a place on the school bus two weeks before the new school year

was due to start.

"I am calling on the Government to urgently expand the School Transport Scheme. The current system of 'concessionary' tickets for children deemed to live 'too close' to their school is not working, is unfair and is causing added stress and frustration to families.

"On one primary school bus route my office made representations for ten children who had been told that they were eligible for concessionary tickets but that there was no room for them on the school bus. This school bus route is currently serviced by a mini-bus and capacity could be easily increased by using a larger bus. But instead under the current system Bus Eireann will not hire a larger bus to operate the route and the ten children without tickets must make their way to school by car," commented Deputy Whitmore.

"Another reason that children are not being offered school bus places is the requirement that they must be attending the school that is geographically closest to their home. This is hugely problematic and another example of the School Transport Scheme failing students in its current form. There are a range of reasons why a child may not be attending the nearest school to their home and my office have worked with several families in this situation. One family's children have moved schools due

to bullying; another student could not attend the nearest school as the road between his family

home and the school was rural and inaccessible during winter. But the overwhelming reason across Wicklow that children do not go to the school nearest their home is because that school is oversubscribed, and they cannot get a place.

"The lack of school places and in particular Secondary School places is a huge problem across Wicklow and especially in Greystones and East Wicklow. At present there is no collaboration between school admissions policies and the School Transport Scheme. This means that families who have missed out on a school place close to their home are being punished again with the news that their child is also not eligible for a place on the school bus.

"At a time when we are desperately trying to cut our carbon emissions why are we forcing families back into their cars? Transport is one of our highest carbon emitters in Ireland and this is an opportunity for the Government to tackle it head on. By expanding the School Transport Scheme to include more children we would be directly lowering our carbon emissions, taking private cars off the roads, and teaching our children from a young age the value and importance of public transport.

"Surely for a Government that repeatedly uses the mantra of being green, this is a simple measure to implement, and one which would make a huge difference to families across the country," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

OPEN DAY
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1pm to 4pm

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'Back to school isn't just for the kids'

Back to school isn't just for the kids. From qualified Special Needs Assistants to artists working in wood, Bray's local adult education centre does it all.

Ireland's Further Education & Training sector - or FET - has come a very long way over the past few decades. Nowadays everything is certified, and the adults of the town and its surrounding region have tremendous opportunities to learn new skills, gain new knowledge, receive qualifications and use them to explore all sorts of new options in work. The process is simple: we

learn and we earn. No one is excluded. FET is for everyone. Year after year, Bray Adult Education Centre teachers are told by their students that they never thought they could achieve what they've achieved; and those students are the first to admit that they were wrong. This is one of the true good news stories of modern Ireland. Nowadays we make progress

throughout our lives - personal progress and professional progress. Like other FET centres, Bray Adult Education Centre - in The Civic Centre - is still hard at it, recruiting new students. The options are fabulous. FET opportunities are some of the easiest services to get access to. The door is always open. You only have to walk in.



Bray Civic Centre, location of Bray Adult Education Centre.

My Little Library Bags empowering junior infants



The My Little Library Bags initiative is aimed at welcoming new junior infants to the world of education and fostering a love for reading from an early age.

With the new school year just around the corner Wicklow County Council Public Library Service is reminding parents and guardians of children due to start Junior Infants in September to make sure to collect their My Little Library Bag.

The My Little Library Bags initiative is aimed at welcoming new junior infants to the world of education and fostering a love for reading from an early age.

"We believe that every child's journey into formal education should be filled with excitement and wonder," says Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, "By providing these My Little Library Bags, we aim to make the transition to school a pos-

itive experience for every junior infant and their families. Our libraries are here to support the development of children, fostering not only literacy skills but also a sense of belonging and confidence."

Starting school is a significant milestone in every child's life and our libraries are committed to making this transition smoother and more joyful for both pupils and parents.

Through the "My Little

Library Bags" project, every junior infant in the county can visit their local library and receive a complimentary bag of carefully curated picture books. These titles have been thoughtfully chosen and focus on starting school, well-being, and making friends - topics that are important to young learners.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, added: "The 'My Little Library Bags' initiative underlines

the significance of library membership for families.

This initiative not only equips children with the tools for school readiness but also emphasises the role of reading in nurturing curiosity, empathy, and cognitive development."

For more information about the My Little Library Bags initiative and other library programmes, please visit <https://www.wicklow.ie/Living/Services/Libraries> or contact library@wicklowcoco.ie



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KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD



Only a couple of weeks to go. Don't miss out!

Your local Further Education & Training Centre still has some golden opportunities for you on these courses (coming up in September):

- **Part-Time Crafts:** Wood craft, leather work, pyrography (one of the most enjoyable things you'll ever do)
- **Inclusive Education & Training:** Special Needs Assistant course
- The QQI award in **Healthcare Support:** a **must** for every credible Healthcare Assistant (don't compromise on professionalism!)

- The new qualification in Childcare (Early Learning & Care: you can get it right here in Bray)
- **21st Century Skills For Work:** all the skills you need to enter any workplace with confidence
- **Beginners Art:** no previous experience needed, just the willingness to learn
- **Creative Craft:** a superb training in Art, Crafts & Design for the more ambitious learner
- A fantastic range of **Computing Courses:** full-time and part-time options available
- **CompTIA A+:** professional training in maintenance and networking



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College Choice - A Different Pathway with BIFE

Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) are full steam ahead preparing for the new academic year and to prove it, they are launching their new BA (Hons) Degree in Immersive Media Production.

This level 8 degree programme will be run in conjunction with the IADT, the first two years in BIFE with the final two years being run in the IADT. This exciting new degree will encompass various forms of media including virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and 360-degree video. No CAO points are required to do this degree course. You just simply apply to BIFE directly at www.bife.ie. BIFE will not charge any tuition fees for this degree course but do hurry as places are limited.

While in many cases students, schools and parents see the CAO as the 'be all and end all' for those seeking third-level education, nothing could be further from the truth according to Gabriel Allen, deputy principal at Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE). "Over recent years many new avenues, like the Immersive Media Production Degree above, have opened up to students to enable them to pursue their dream career

via a different route. We have over 70 full-time courses to choose from, all progressing on to Higher Education Institutes in Ireland and abroad", according to Deputy Principal Gabriel Allen.

He added, "Further Education offers a learner, who may not have achieved the required CAO points, the opportunity to gain advanced entry onto honours degree programmes."

The huge range of courses available at BIFE offers learners fabulous opportunities, not only for those looking for additional skills or hoping to go directly into employment, but also as an alternative route on to a college course in a university or institute of technology in Ireland or abroad.

Over the past few years, graduates of BIFE have achieved honours degrees across a wide range of programmes, opening up a myriad of career opportunities from graphic design to performing arts to psychology.

This year BIFE will offer Higher

National Diplomas in the following:

- Fine Art - Art Practice
- Acting
- Dance
- TV & Film production
- Music Production
- Music Performance
- Traditional Irish Music
- Graphic Design

As Gabriel Allen explained, "These eight courses will allow graduating students to proceed to the final year of an honours Degree Programme in Ireland or Britain if that is their ultimate ambition."

This year, the Institute has launched several new courses at levels 5 & 6:

- Soccer Coaching in collaboration with Liverpool FC Level 5
- Occupational Therapy Assistant Level 5
- Dog Obedience & Training - Start Your Own Business Level 6
- Payroll & Office Administration Level 5
- Hospitality & Business Management Level 6

New B.A Degree in Immersive Media Production

Year 1 - 2 in BIFE

Year 3 - 4 in IADT

No CAO Points

No Tuition Fees in BIFE

Apply Now



- English Language and IT Skills for International Students Level 5
- English Language and Business for International Students Level 5
- English Language and Healthcare Studies for International Students Level 5
- English Language and General Studies for International Students Level 5

Work Experience is a vital part of the BIFE courses and now all students in the College have the

opportunity to complete a 3-week or a 3-month work placement abroad in countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy, Finland, Malta or Czechia under the Erasmus+ Programme which is sponsored by the European Union. This is a terrific opportunity for BIFE students, not only to gain valuable work experience in a European country but also to experience a different culture and to broaden their horizons. Allen assured that there are

many opportunities for mature students to study and progress at BIFE. "All courses have valuable certification and offer progression routes to Higher Education, yet you don't need CAO points to study at Bray Institute."

Full details of the above courses are available on our website www.bife.ie. Students can apply online on the website by clicking on the 'Apply Now' button. **There is no application fee.**

Leave the CAO points race behind with Further Education

School-leavers can explore the great variety of Further Education & Training (FET) courses on offer at Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (ETB) to prepare them for the career they want.

The many and varied FET courses on offer locally at Kildare and Wicklow ETB can give school-leavers receiving their Leaving Cert results an opportunity to leave the points race behind and

shape their own pathway towards a future career that suits them, according to SOLAS, the Further Education & Training Authority.

Culinary Arts, Furniture Design, Film

and Media, Animal Care, Arts, Software and Engineering are just a sample of the many cutting-edge choices school-leavers can explore locally at Kildare and Wicklow ETB, with many courses

remaining open for application until the end of the summer, with many courses remaining open for application until the end of the summer.

Delivered through the 16 Education and

Training Boards (ETBs), Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses are available in every county in Ireland, allowing learners the opportunity to further their studies close to home. The courses can provide students with pathways to higher education and also for direct entry into in-demand careers.

Commenting on the FET options available to those about to receive their Leaving Certificate results, Andrew Brownlee, CEO at SOLAS, said: "Our advice is that there's more than one way to reach your full potential after school and I encourage you to take the time to choose the path that's right for you."

"Further Education and Training provides a wealth of pathways outside of the points system that can lead school-

leavers on to the career that they want. Not only is FET a smart choice in its own right, it also opens up routes to higher education and prepares students for successful careers in countless cutting-edge industries. There is life beyond the Leaving Certificate, with endless opportunities available through FET to get students to where they want to be."

Paddy Lavelle, General Secretary at Education and Training Boards Ireland noted "There are so many benefits to exploring the wide variety of opportunities that Further Education & Training (FET) has to offer school leavers. Flexible, smart FET courses currently on offer through the 16 ETBs across the country can take learners into a broad range of exciting careers

and pathways, helping them to achieve their full potential. FET is for everyone, with courses on offer in every county in Ireland, providing school leavers with the opportunity to stay close to home while they take that next step on their learning journey, and the exciting new pathway/ tertiary programmes to higher education can be accessed through the ETBs outside of the points system. For anyone who is still uncertain about their Leaving Cert results, I welcome and encourage them to explore the expansive and varied range of FET courses available through their local ETB today."

Ken Seery, FET Director of the Education and Training Board of Kildare and Wicklow concluded "School leavers can find an extensive and diverse range of FET

courses outside of the points system at our Education and Training Board. The opportunities are endless for students in counties Kildare and Wicklow, with the local provision of a number of Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) and pre-university courses available at Bray Institute of Further Education (PLC), St. Conleths Newbridge (PLC), KWETB Training Services and in our extensive adult education programmes that offer clear pathways for learners to study at degree level or to direct employment in an array of exciting careers."

People who received their Leaving Certificate results can explore the FET courses on offer through Kildare and Wicklow ETB at www.thisisfet.ie or www.KWETB.ie or email trainingcourses@kwetb.ie

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'There are many pathways to your dream career'

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD is reminding students that there are many different routes when it comes to pursuing their chosen area of study and attaining their dream career.

Minister Harris said: "I want to congratulate every Leaving Cert student who has made it this far. I truly hope the news they received is what they were hoping for. This cohort of students has faced many challenges over the past few years but, with the support of their teachers and parents, they have now reached this significant milestone in their life. It's a wonderful achievement and they should take this time to enjoy what is an incredibly special moment."

"In advance of the CAO offers being issued I would also like to remind students that there are so many pathways out there towards their chosen studies and dream career. If they do not receive offers for one of their preferred courses do not give up - please know that there other routes available."

"There are plenty of courses which can get you where you want to go, be it through PLC and Further Education courses, apprenticeships or the recently announced unified tertiary courses in which students will be able to enroll in one of 23 new degree courses outside of the CAO points race across a wide range of sectors - for the first time ever. For each student there is so much to be excited about as a new chapter of their life begins. Remember that education is a lifelong journey, one which can constantly improve your knowledge and skills and, ultimately, help you achieve your full potential."



Minister Simon Harris

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BIFE Night Classes - Mondays, Starting September 25th 2023



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- **Adobe.** 6:45-9:45pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **ESOL.** 7.30-9.30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Film Special FX.** 7.00-9.00pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Employment Opportunities** in Ireland: Understanding your Potential (through Ukranian language). 7.00-9.00pm. Duration 6 weeks.
- **Ukulele.** 7.45-9.15pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Pilates** - Level 1. 7:30-8:30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Pilates** - Level 2. 8:30-9:30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **First Aid and Cardiac first responder.** 7.00-9.00pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Dress Making.** 7.30-9.30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Bridge** - Beginners. 7:30-9:30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Yoga** - Beginners. 6.45-8.00pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Yoga** - Improvers. 8.00-9.15pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Tai Chi.** 7:00-8:30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Digital Photography.** 7:30-9:30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Furniture Making** - Woodwork for Beginners. 7.30-9.30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Italian** - Beginners. 6:45-8:10pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Italian** - Improvers. 8:15-9:45pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Conversational Irish** - beginners. 6.45-8.15pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Conversational Irish** - Improvers. 8.15-9.45pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Pottery/Ceramics.** 6:40-9.10pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **French** - Beginners. 8:15-9:45pm. Duration 8 weeks.
- **French** - Improvers. 6:40-8:10pm. Duration 8 weeks.
- **Spanish** - Beginners. 6.45-8.15pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Spanish** - Improvers. 8.15-9.30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Beekeeping** for Beginners. 7.30-9.30pm. Duration 8 weeks.
- **Introduction to Make-Up Artistry.** 7.30-9.30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **TEFL.** 7.30-9.30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Leaving Certificate Irish.** 7:15-8:30pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Guitar.** 7:30-9:00pm. Duration 10 weeks.
- **Social Media Marketing** (Online). 6.30-8.30pm. Duration 10 weeks.

Further details on courses are available on www.bife.ie/morning-and-evening-courses/evening-classes

Classes begin Monday September 25th. Please note that classes can only be formed where numbers warrant it. If classes do not form full refunds will be issued promptly.

Full Terms and Conditions are published on the Website.

Please go to **BIFE.IE** for full course details

Second phase of desirable Newcastle development ready to launch

Chancel Way show house open for viewing, Saturday 2nd September, 1pm-3pm.

The second phase of Chancel Way, located in the highly desirable village of Newcastle, is being launched on Saturday, 2nd September with the show house open for viewing from 1:00pm to 3:00pm on the day.

Brought to the market by Dwellings Ltd and being sold by Derek Byrne Property Consultants, there's already a very high level of interest and the official launch at the showhouse on Saturday will offer interested parties an opportunity to see the quality of finish and design first hand. The second phase of the development offers an additional 10 beautifully crafted A-rated homes set in a sustainable and natural environment. These highly energy efficient homes are both elegant and practical and are designed for modern day living. Whether playing with the kids, entertaining friends, chilling on the couch or working from home - you can do it all in a bright, comfortable and relaxing environment.

Located only 3km from Junction 13 of the N11 and 10 minutes from Greystones the houses all have the highly prized A2 Building Energy Rating (BER) rating, which reduces ongoing energy costs for homeowners.

Selling Agent Derek Byrne says he is experiencing a high volume of enquiries about Phase 2 from potential buyers.

"The unique village location is ideal for both young families and busy professionals, whether trading up or down. Dwellings have delivered a fantastic product with a standard of finish both internally and externally that is exceptional in comparison to other developments in the area, this combined with much larger than standard gardens have ensured Chancel Way is proving very attractive to all purchasers in the North Wicklow market" he adds.

Newcastle offers a quieter alternative to Greystones while still offering access to all the amenities close by. The units feature high quality sash windows and slate roofs complementing the existing village aesthetic. Built with high-quality insulated timber frames



Modern, fitted kitchens with stone counter tops and tiled splashbacks are standard throughout



Chancel Way, Newcastle

plus high-performance grey uPVC double-glazed windows and doors, all the homes feature high ceilings on the ground and first floors, coving to hall and living/dining room, solid timber white finish staircase with varnished teak handrail, chamfered style skirting and architraves while high quality flooring is provided as standard on the ground floor.

Designed with all the requirements of modern living in mind, the properties all feature broadband ducting, TV points in the kitchen, USB charging points in

the main living area and bedroom and telephone and data connections in hall areas.

Modern, fitted kitchens with stone counter tops and tiled splashbacks are standard throughout along with a generous separate utility area. Fitted wardrobes have been installed in all the bedrooms which complement the theme of the kitchen units in colour and door furniture.

All bathrooms and ensuite rooms come fully tiled and have been fitted with high-quality sanitaryware, heated towel rails and

vanity units. Bathrooms are fitted with electric shower and shower screen while the ensuites have pump showers and shower doors installed.

Outside of attending the launch viewing on Saturday, 2nd September from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, prospective buyers can arrange individual viewings of the show house with the Derek Byrne Property team or register their interest by contacting Derek Byrne Property Consultants on 01 9081470 or by emailing info@dbproperty.ie.

36 new social homes under construction in Wicklow

Respond, the construction-led Approved Housing Body and service provider, has 36 new social and cost rental homes in construction in Wicklow. Respond now owns and manages 164 homes across Wicklow, accommodating 377 tenants.

The announcement was made as Respond's Annual Report 2022 was launched last week by Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien TD, detailing the continued positive impact Respond's home building and

community support services have in cities across Ireland.

Respond is on track to triple the number of social and cost rental homes it has in construction to over 4,100 in the coming months, expanding its construction pro-

gramme over the next 12 months to €2bn.

Supported by Local Authorities, Respond has secured fixed price contracts with several leading developers and building contractors to deliver large mixed tenure housing developments across Dublin and Cork. With Government support, the organisation could deliver 700 of these new homes this year and a further 900 by the end of 2024.

Respond's home building programme currently has 1,396 social and cost rental homes in construction across the country.

Respond has begun construction on 3,347 homes since March 2018, and now manages 7,084 properties providing homes for 16,541 tenants. While challenged by rising construction sector costs, last year alone

it delivered 484 new social and cost rental homes and commenced

construction of a further 460 homes.

This includes the final completion of large mixed-tenure developments at Charlestown, Finglas (138 homes) and Enniskerry Road, Stepside (155 homes). It also progressed its Long Mile Road development, which will provide 153 homes when completed later this year.

Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage said: "Through the hard

work of Approved Housing Bodies like Respond, our social and cost rental housing supply is increasing and we are going in the right direction. Increasing supply is at the heart of Housing for All and is key to ensuring families can secure accommodation at affordable prices and that our housing market functions effectively. Respond's work is critical in helping us towards achieving these aims."



Aisling White, Adrienne O'Connor and Tara O'Leary at the recent St. Catherine's Association summer event on the grounds of Newcastle Hospital.

Wicklow housing projects shortlisted for awards

The Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) has announced that two housing projects in Wicklow have been shortlisted for the prestigious ICSH Community Housing Awards. The biennial awards recognise excellence across various different categories of public housing delivery by both local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs).

The shortlisted entries for Wicklow are Respond's housing project at Rathoran, Baltinglass (shortlisted in the Regeneration category), and Cirle VHA's housing project at Fairgreen Manor, Dunlavin (shortlisted in the Best Family Housing category).

CEO of the ICSH Donal McManus said: "The quality of entries for the 2023 Community Housing Awards is of the highest standard yet. I was particularly impressed by the innovation showed across the regeneration category. Choosing which projects to shortlist was a difficult task and speaks to the dedication of all those working across housing associations and local authorities as they deliver much needed homes across the country."

Projects shortlisted for the ICSH Allianz Community Housing Awards are also

competing in the ICSH Public Choice Award. This category gives members of the public an opportunity to support a shortlisted project. These are the 11th Biennial National Community Housing Awards which were first established in 2003.

The public can vote for their favourite project at www.icsh.ie from early October. The winners will be announced at the ICSH Conference in Wexford on the 18th-19th of October.

Zero dog fouling fines handed out in Wicklow

Wicklow was one of 18 counties where zero dog fouling fines were issued in 2022. In comparison, 213 fines for inappropriate parking were issued in Wicklow last year. In total, just 82 fines for dog fouling were issued by Local Authorities across the entire country last year. In response, the National Council for the Blind (NCBI) have launched a campaign called 'Clear Our Paths', calling on dog owners to clean up after their dogs.

Kerry County Council had the highest number of fines with 27 and the council reported that there were two convictions related to those fines.

Dog fouling is a huge issue for people who are blind or vision impaired who use footpaths daily. A recent NCBI survey showed that it was the third most frequent unexpected obstacle encountered by respondents. Not only can dog fouling cause a slip hazard, but it can also be distressing for white cane users whose canes are often dirtied by faeces.

Cars parked on footpaths emerged as the number one obstacle faced by respondents to the NCBI survey. NCBI recently learned that over 19,000 fines were handed out in 2022 for issues around street and inappropriate parking. Three councils reported that they had not handed out any fines, while Mayo County

Council said there were no fines handed out in the Claremorris/ Swinford area. Roscommon County Council said there are no traffic wardens in the county.

Parking inappropriately, especially on footpaths, causes a serious hazard for people who are blind or vision impaired. If a footpath is blocked, people with sight loss may be injured by walking into traffic to get around a vehicle, injured walking into the vehicle, or injured by stepping off kerbs in unfamiliar locations.

NCBI said it recognises local councils' efforts and challenges to support clear paths in their communities and some councils provided information about positive steps they have taken to curb the dangers posed by dog fouling in particular.

Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste is supporting this year's Clear Our Paths campaign. He

said: "The stories and challenges I've heard have made it clear to me that we, the general public, need to work harder to keep our paths safe for people who are blind or vision impaired. It is important that we take an extra few seconds each day to ensure that our actions do not impact the ability of people who are blind or vision impaired to get out and about safely. Please support Clear Our Paths in whatever way you can, your small gesture can make a huge difference."

Aaron Mullaniff, Chief Services Officer with NCBI said: "This new data we have gathered is a means to explain to the public the dangers of dog fouling on footpaths and the dangers of cars parked on footpaths. Firstly, the dog fouling data shows that councils can't be expected to police the issue alone. It's impractical to

think that wardens could observe every single dog owner who doesn't clean up after their dog and then issue them with a fine. There needs to be significant effort from the public to clean up after their pets in the first instance. It's imperative that we all work to make our footpaths usable for all members in our communities.

"Secondly, if councils have noted over 19,000 incidents of inappropriate parking by way of a fine, can you imagine how many undetected instances there are that will pose a real risk to those living with sight loss? We're asking everyone in Ireland to put yourself in a blind or vision impaired person's shoes when you're walking your pets, parking your car, putting out your bins or whatever it might be, and to act in a way that's considerate to those people's needs."



Aine Byrne with Alex and Sallyanne Massey at the Arklow Rock Parnells Summer Camp.



Madeleine McNamara is standing to the left, alongside Deirdre Deverell with her black guide dog Bruno and beside her is The Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste, Martina Gibney who is standing with her long cane, and Chris White, NCBI CEO.



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RNLI Lifeboat Stations open their doors and lifeboats to the public

August 6th saw both Wicklow and Arklow RNLI Lifeboat Stations opening their doors and lifeboats to the public. It was the first open day in four years due to Covid 19. Considering the very mixed weather it turned into a hugely successful day.

The volunteers had worked hard in the months running up to the day to ensure the facilities were ready to welcome the public. The fundraising team provided endless supplies of tea, coffee and sweet treats. The volunteer RNLI lifeboat crew provided tours of lifeboats and answered any questions asked by children and adults alike.

In Wicklow both the Shannon class lifeboats, the RNLB Ruth and

David Arthur and RNLB Joanna and Henry Williams along with the D class Denis Audrey were available for the public to explore. The volunteer crews were happy to answer any questions, discuss the equipment onboard and inform the public of the roles they have within the stations.

There was also a demonstration of the capabilities of the lifeboats provided during a simulated rescue. The

public were shown slow speed transfers between the lifeboats, man overboard drill and the manoeuvrability of the lifeboats.

The Wicklow RNLI station mascot Stormy Stan also made an appearance meeting, greeting, and posing for photos with all the children that were down for a look. The crew also took the opportunity to take a crew photo.

Also, on the day the

Gardaí, the Garda Sub Aqua Unit, Civil Defence and the Coast Guard were there demonstrating their equipment and again answering questions from the public.

Speaking after the event volunteer lifeboat press officer Connie O'Gara said "We'd like to thank the public for visiting us for the open day. Considering the torrential rain at times, it was great to see so many people come down and have a look around. It takes a lot of time to organise, but it is a nice way for the crew to say thanks for all the support and donations we receive throughout the year."



Sean Kealy, Dirdre Keogh from SSE Renewables, and Tina Kenny at the recent Open Day at Arklow RNLI's lifeboat station



Elle and Thomas Kavanagh at the Arklow RNLI open day



Wicklow RNLI crew and volunteers at the recent open day at the station

Arklow & Courtown RNLI comes to the aid of adrift motor cruiser

Arklow RNLI launched on 9th August at approximately 5.30pm to a request to assist a motor cruiser which had lost propulsion and was adrift with three persons aboard South East of Cahore Point.

The volunteer crew made their way to the lifeboat station and within minutes of the request were aboard RNLB Ger Tigchlear and enroute to the reported location. In moderate conditions with good visibility the vessel had lost propulsion and was drifting.

When the lifeboat reached the casualty a tow was established. The vessel was taken on tow to Courtown where our colleagues from Courtown RNLI had been launched to assist in the operation, the tow line was transferred to Courtown Lifeboat who towed the motor cruiser into Courtown harbour and brought the three-person crew safely ashore.

Arklow Lifeboat then stood by as Courtown RNLI towed the vessel into safe harbour at Courtown and then proceeded back to base at Arklow Harbour.

Arklow RNLI's crew on this callout were Ned Dillon, Brendan Dillon, Eddie McElheron, James Russell, John Tyrrell, Josh McAnaspie.

Following the callout, Mark Corcoran, Volunteer Lifeboat Press Officer at Arklow RNLI said: "Our teams dedication and training for these scenarios really paid off this evening, this type of joint operation with our flanking station is something we prepare for in joint training exercises, thankfull the casualty had done all the right things which allowed us to get there and be able to assist".



Roundwood racer wins double championship titles

Roundwood native Fionn Stephens recently became a proud double champion in Athboy, Co. Meath.

Entering his first year at Colaiste Chraobh Abhann secondary school in Kilcoole, the 12 year-old is making an impressive name for himself totalling five Irish championships since starting this sporting passion back in 2019.

Fionn's 2023 race season calendar shows eight official Spanish rounds from March to November, riding in the Moto5 class. Spain has been recognised as the home for young up-and-coming Moto-GP riders.

Fionn will have to hone, chisel and perfect his craft to compete at this higher level, however determination, dedication and true Irish stamina are by far his main power sources. This has been demonstrated by Fionn taking on a 10-round Irish championship that saw him compete in both the North and South of Ireland, in two motorbike championship classes. Racing the Bikeworld Ovhalé 140 titled the 'Jnr Mini GP Class', and the Bikeworld Pitbike 140 titled the 'Jr elite Class'.

Bikeworld Ovhalé 140 - Round 7 and 8 brought us to Watergrasshill in County Cork, where Fionn competed in 6 races on the Ovhalé 140. Fionn came in first place in 5 out of the 6 races and polled 2nd in the final race. These results have seen Fionn secure the Irish Jnr Mini-GP Ovhalé 140 championship title with over 25 points in the lead.

Round 9 Brought us to Athboy Co. Meath having already secured the championship in the previous rounds on the Ovhalé, Fionn, the true sportsman he is won all 3 races never ceasing to amaze or entertain his growing supporter's and fan base.

Pitbike 140 Round 7 and 8th Round in Watergrass Hill, Co. Cork we encountered major engine problems causing Fionn to qualify last on the grid, the championship looked over, however with the help of the racing paddock and Fionn's off track likeability a bike was offered for him to compete, having never ridden before, Fionn with the eyes of the paddock on him, fight

from the back of the grid in last place up through the field of 15 other competitors, then battled with the top two riders all within 8, 36 second laps to come first across the finish line getting the win, repeating this in the 3rd race of the day to get the overall win.

Round 9 at Athboy Fionn just needed to score ahead of Buster Sherman Boyd to secure this championship, in race one he brought the pitbike 140 home in 1st place followed by two consecutive 2nd places all ahead of Buster to seal his second Championship for 2023.

With the 10th round clashing with a round in Spain on the 8th September, Fionn's hard work is now completed for this year in Ireland becoming double Irish champion for 2023. Now the real work begins across the water as he flies the flag for Ireland.

"We would like to thank Team 109 and all our sponsors for their help and support, without our team, there is no dream so thank you," Fionn's family stated.



Fionn celebrating his double Irish Championship in Meath.

Corcoran and Condren win Irish Senior Titles in Powerscourt



Suzanne Corcoran and Alan Condren

Suzanne Corcoran and Alan Condren were crowned champions at the Irish Senior Women's Amateur Open and the Irish Senior Men's Amateur Close Strokeplay in Powerscourt.

By Valerie Clancy

Four-time Irish Senior Women's Amateur Close Champion, Corcoran, claimed the Irish Senior Women's Amateur Open title to add to her already impressive list of victories. She shot a total of +8 for the three rounds to give her a two-stroke victory over Gertie McMullen (The Island).

The Portumna golfer has come close to the title many times but was finally able to get over the line in the rain at Powerscourt.

"It feels absolutely amazing. I've been playing in it for a number of years now and I've been in the last three-ball, I think three

times and never came out of it well, so it was really nice to get it over the line this time," said Corcoran.

After claiming the Connacht Women's Amateur Open in June, Corcoran kept her fine form going to join a historic list of players who have won both the Irish Senior Close and Open.

"This just is the icing on the cake because I always knew I was a good match player but I always felt maybe stroke play wasn't my best aspect so it's really nice to be able to have a win today," said Corcoran.

"I absolutely loved

Powerscourt. I came up to practice and the first day we played, we couldn't even play because it was so wet. We only walked around and took measurements, came back again and played again. Loved it in the practice day and I just thought I love this course and I think if you go into something really enjoying the course it probably gives you a good vibe about the event."

Condren made history today as he became the inaugural champion of Irish Senior Men's Amateur Close Strokeplay. The Greystones golfer played some fantastic golf to shoot a total score of -10 for the event to give him a six-shot victory over Galway Bay's Eddie McCormack.

"Played very solid today I made no mistakes, couple of

birdies and just one bogey so it was really solid," said Condren.

"-10 total for three rounds, it's fantastic. It's probably the best I've ever shot I think."

It was an enjoyable win for Condren as he was able to share his win with his dad, Eddie, who was on the bag for him this week. Eddie has plenty of experience too having won every Irish and provincial senior title in the past.

"It feels fantastic. I won the Ulster Seniors this year already so to get a second win is fantastic. I won an Irish mid-amateur a number of years ago so to have two of them is really fantastic, so I'm delighted," said Condren.

"I love Powerscourt. I've played here before a number of times. I've won the scratch cup here before so it's a good omen."

Wicklow Archers get Support for Sport grant

Wicklow Archers archery club has been announced as one of 25 sports clubs around the country that will receive funding under this year's Texaco Support for Sport initiative. The club will be awarded €5,000.

In its third year, the scheme is hosted and organised by Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, the company that markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand, with the judging process overseen by former Irish rugby international and well-known broadcaster, Donncha O'Callaghan.

Of the clubs receiving funding this year, €50,000 will be divided amongst six clubs devoted to GAA sports and four soccer clubs. In addition, a further €25,000 is shared equally amongst three basketball clubs and two tennis clubs. Further disbursements will see €50,000 being divided amongst 10 additional clubs whose disciplines include archery, athletics, bowls, cricket, handball, hockey, gymnastics, kayaking, rugby and sub-aqua ñ all receiving €5,000 each.

Congratulating the winners, James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations, Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited referred to what he called 'the important contribution' that sports clubs make within their communities and throughout Irish society as a whole.

"Our initiative provides vital funding to clubs that have an important place in, and seek to enhance their contribution to, their local communities. Since its inception, we've distributed almost €400,000 to a wide variety of sports clubs throughout the country which has greatly helped them to continue to play an essential and positive role in their communities, something of which we are very proud," Mr. Twohig added.



Vinnie, Erin, Aine, Gillian, Siun and Senan Byrne at the Arklow Rock Parnells Summer Camp

Two Wicklow photographers are shortlisted for the Zurich Portrait Prize

From hundreds of entries, the shortlists of this year's Zurich Portrait Prize and Zurich Young Portrait Prize have been announced by the National Gallery of Ireland. 26 artists, working across a variety of media, have made it through to the final stage of the Zurich Portrait Prize, while 20 young artists aged between four and eighteen years old have been shortlisted for the Zurich Young Portrait Prize. Wicklow photographers Gerry Blake and David Stephenson have been shortlisted for the Zurich Portrait Prize.



Courtney, living on a bus, 2021, Photo by Gerry Blake.

The Zurich Portrait Prize shortlist includes painting, sculpture and photography, demonstrating the breadth of contemporary Irish art. The winner of the Zurich Portrait Prize will receive a cash prize of €15,000 and will be commissioned to create a work for the national portrait collection, for which they will be awarded a further €5,000. Two additional awards of €1,500 will be given to highly commended works. Judges for the Zurich Portrait Prize are Dorothy Cross RHA, artist, Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, and Anne Stewart, Senior Curator of Art, National Museums Northern Ireland.

The Zurich Young Portrait Prize returns for its fifth year in 2023 as a showcase for the artistic talent of young people from across the island of Ireland. Five winners (one from each respective age category and an overall winner) will be selected from a shortlist of hundreds of entries from young people aged four to 18. Exhibitions of the shortlisted works in both competitions run at the National Gallery of Ireland from 2nd December 2023



Ann and Ollie, Main Street, Wexford, 2023. Photo by David Stephenson

and 10th March 2024.

Dr Caroline Campbell, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, said, "With the annual Zurich Portrait Prize and Zurich Young Portrait Prize, our aim is to showcase the work of Irish artists and

encourage an interest in contemporary Irish portraiture. Each year, the artists shortlisted demonstrate an incredible breadth of Irish artistic talent. We're proud to partner with Zurich Insurance plc once again this year and we look forward

to seeing who and what has inspired artists of all ages to create portraits in 2023."

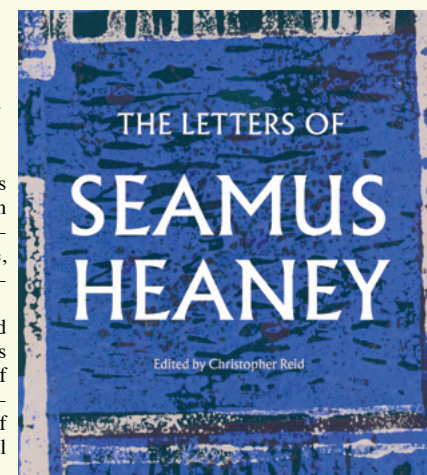
Neil Freshwater, CEO of Zurich, said, "The Zurich Portrait Prize and Zurich Young Portrait Prize showcases the wonderful cre-

ativity and expertise of Ireland's portrait artists of all ages. We are delighted to see such a strong and diverse selection of artworks in this year's shortlists and very proud to sponsor these uplifting competitions."

The Letters of Seamus Heaney

Edited by Christopher Reid, *The Letters of Seamus Heaney* (to be released in hardback and as an ebook on 5th October), is an astute selection of some of the thousands of letters Heaney wrote over the course of his life, to fellow poets, friends, artists, publishers, politicians, students and more.

In this book we are given direct access to the life and poetic development of a literary titan, from his early days in Belfast through his decision to settle in the Republic of Ireland, to the gradual broadening of horizons that culminated in being awarded the Nobel Prize and the years of international eminence that kept him heroically busy until his death.



It Takes a Village - 1 Hour Holiday at The Cove



Saturday 9th September, 1pm at The Cove Beach, Greystones. Donation €5 for a beach ball or bucket & spade available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550

Please come down with your kids for an hour for a care-free time at the cove to show your support for voluntary smartphone ban for Greystones and Delgany primary school children.

The hour will be filled with fun activities such as building sand castles, volleyball, music and much more. It Takes a Village needs you to support our mission of protecting and prolonging childhoods by way of our voluntary mobile phone code.

The "It Takes a Village" initiative of the 8 primary schools in both Greystones and Delgany and is led by Rachel Harper, Principal of St Patricks National School. It is a forum where parents, teachers, sports coaches and community groups can share their experiences. The project is also supported by Greystones Town Team.

We will not reveal the surprise but there will be some visual and exciting stunts. Join our mega photoshoot at 2.15pm immediately afterwards.

Donation €5 for a beach ball or bucket & spade. Dress colourful.

9TH SEPTEMBER

9:00 AM - 2 PM

IT Takes a Village

'ONE HOUR HOLIDAY'

- ✓ New initiatives
- ✓ To protect childhood
- ✓ Primary school children
- ✓ & families welcome
- ✓ No phones allowed!

the Cove, Greystones

donation - 5 EUR for a beach ball or bucket and spade

LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notice

**AN CHÚIRT DÚICHE (THE DISTRICT COURT)
DISTRICT COURT AREA OF BRAY, DISTRICT NO. 16
THE PUBLIC DANCE HALL ACT, 1935
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PUBLIC DANCE LICENCE**

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION OF SUGARLOAF VENTURES LIMITED IN RESPECT OF THE PREMISES KNOWN AS POWERSCOURT HOTEL

APPLICANT

TAKE NOTICE that Sugarloaf Ventures Limited having its registered office at Intercontinental Dublin, Simmonscourt Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 being the holder of a Seven Day Publican's On-Licence intends to apply to the Annual Licensing Court, sitting at Bray District Court, The Courthouse, Main Street, Bray in the County of Wicklow on the 28th day of September 2023 at 10.30am or so soon thereafter as this Application may be taken, for the renewal of a Licence to use the premises known as "Killing Hollow", Powerscourt Demesne, Enniskerry in the County of Wicklow and Court Area and District aforesaid, for Public Dancing. The Applicant intends to apply for Special Exemption Orders.

Dated this 22nd day of August 2023

Signed:

Benville Robinson LLP

Solicitors for the Applicant, 24A Florence Road, Bray, CO. WICKLOW

TO: The Garda Superintendent at Bray Garda Station, Convent Avenue, Bray, County Wicklow
TO: The Garda Superintendent at Donnybrook Garda Station, 43 Donnybrook Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.
TO: The Chief Fire Officer at Bray Fire Station, Boghall Road, Bray, County Wicklow.
TO: The District Court Clerk, Bray District Court, The Courthouse, Main Street, Bray, County Wicklow.
TO: The Health Service Executive Official, Wicklow Local Health Office, Glenside Road, County Wicklow.
TO: The County Council Official, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow, County Wicklow.

Legal Notice

**AN CHÚIRT DÚICHE (THE DISTRICT COURT)
DISTRICT COURT AREA OF BRAY, DISTRICT NO. 16
THE PUBLIC DANCE HALL ACT, 1935
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A PUBLIC DANCE LICENCE**

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION OF JOHN DUGGAN AS NOMINEE OF MULTILANE LIMITED IN RESPECT OF THE PREMISES KNOWN AS THE MARTELLO HOTEL

APPLICANT

TAKE NOTICE that John Duggan as nominee of Multilane Limited having its registered office at "Laxton", Novara Avenue, Bray in the County of Wicklow being the holder of a Seven Day Publican's On-Licence intends to apply to the Annual Licensing Court, sitting at Bray District Court, Courthouse, Main Street, Bray in the County of Wicklow on the 28th day of September 2023 at 10.30am or so soon thereafter as this Application may be taken, for the renewal of a Licence to use the premises known as The Martello Hotel, formerly known as The New International Hotel and situate at Strand Road, Bray in the County of Wicklow and Court area and District aforesaid, for Public Dancing. The Applicant intends to apply for Special Exemption Orders.

Dated this 22nd day of August 2023

Signed:

Benville Robinson LLP, Solicitors for the Applicant,
24A Florence Road, Bray, CO. WICKLOW

TO: The Garda Superintendent at Bray Garda Station, Convent Avenue, Bray, County Wicklow
TO: The Fire Officer at Bray Fire Station, Boghall Road, Bray, County Wicklow.
TO: The District Court Clerk, The Courthouse, Main Street, Bray, County Wicklow.
TO: The Health Service Executive Official, Wicklow Local Health Office, Glenside Road, County Wicklow.
TO: The County Council Official, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow, County Wicklow.

Legal Notice

**AN CHÚIRT DÚICHE (THE DISTRICT COURT)
DISTRICT COURT AREA OF BRAY, DISTRICT NO. 16
REGISTRATION OF CLUBS ACTS, 1904 TO 1988
APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION**

Eithne Dempsey

APPLICANT

TAKE NOTICE that I, Eithne Dempsey of 42 Swanbrook, Southern Cross, Bray, County Wicklow, Secretary of County Wicklow Lawn Tennis Club, a Club whose premises are situated at Vevay Road, Bray, County Wicklow within the Court Area and District aforesaid, hereby apply to the Annual Licensing Court, sitting at Bray District Court, The Courthouse, Civic Centre, Main Street, Bray in the County of Wicklow on the 28th day of September 2023 at 10.30 a.m. or so soon thereafter as this Application may be taken for a Certificate of Registration of the above-mentioned Club.

The Object of the said Club is playing and promotion of Lawn Tennis.

Dated this 22nd day of August 2023

Signed:

Benville & Robinson LLP, Solicitors for the Applicant,
24A Florence Road, Bray, COUNTY WICKLOW.

TO: The Garda Superintendent at Bray Garda Station, Convent Avenue, Bray, County Wicklow
TO: The Fire Officer at Bray Fire Station, Boghall Road, Bray, County Wicklow.
TO: The Health Service Executive Official, Wicklow Local Health Office, Glenside Road, County Wicklow.
TO: The Registrar of Clubs, Bray District Court, Bray, County Wicklow.

Legal Notice

**AN CHÚIRT DÚICHE (THE DISTRICT COURT)
DISTRICT COURT AREA OF BRAY, DISTRICT NO. 16
REGISTRATION OF CLUBS ACTS, 1904 TO 1988
APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION**

APPLICANT

KYLE CANNON

TAKE NOTICE that I, Kyle Cannon of 20 The Avenue, Kilterman Wood, Kilterman, Dublin 18, Secretary of Woodbrook Golf Club, a Club whose premises are situated at Woodbrook, Bray, County Wicklow within the Court Area and District aforesaid, hereby apply to the Annual Licensing Court, sitting at Bray District Court, The Courthouse, Civic Centre, Main Street, Bray in the County of Wicklow on the 28th day of September 2023 at 10.30 a.m. or so soon thereafter as this Application may be taken for a Certificate of Registration of the above-mentioned Club.

The Object of the said Club is the playing and promotion of Golf.

Dated this 22nd day of August 2023

Signed:

Benville Robinson LLP

Solicitors for the Applicant, 24A Florence Road, Bray, CO. WICKLOW

TO: The Garda Superintendent at Bray Garda Station, Convent Avenue, Bray, County Wicklow
TO: The Chief Fire Officer at Bray Fire Station, Boghall Road, Bray, County Wicklow.
TO: The Health Service Executive Official, Wicklow Local Health Office, Glenside Road, County Wicklow.
TO: The Registrar of Clubs, Bray District Court, Bray, County Wicklow.

Wicklow's food & drink network holds its AGM

The Wicklow Naturally AGM was held at An Tairseach Ecology Centre on Wednesday 16th August. Wicklow Naturally is the food and drink network for County Wicklow and An Tairseach, with its ecology centre and farm shop is one of the members.

Paula Johnston, Executive Director of An Tairseach welcomed the Board of Directors and many Wicklow Naturally members to the venue for the meeting.

Following the Chairpersons report by Chairperson Pamela Walsh, and the coordinators report by Paul Smith, a presentation was given by Dee Laffan, Food Journalist, Editor, Podcaster and Author. Dee advised members about how food and drinks businesses should engage with media and gave a comprehensive overview on successful social media strategies for food and drinks businesses.

Following her recent retirement from Wicklow County Council, Christine Flood has stepped down from the Board of Directors of Wicklow Naturally. Christine was thanked most sincerely by the other Board Members, coordinators, and network members for her unwavering service to Wicklow Naturally. It was wholeheartedly agreed that Christine's vision for a food and drinks network for County Wicklow, her tireless work in bringing this to fruition and her generous and continued support has been absolutely vital to the success of Wicklow Naturally to date.

The coordinators, Paul Smith and Santina Kennedy gave sincere thanks to Christine for her tireless work and unwavering enthusiasm for Wicklow Naturally. Paul and Santina also thanked Susan Nichols of Wicklow County Council for the excellent support that she and her colleagues continue to offer to Wicklow Naturally.

Paul Smith thanked members for their active participation and in particular thanked member and celebrity chef Catherine Fulvio for her continuous championing of Wicklow



Celina Stephenson, Thierry Peurois and Deirdre Whitfield at the Wicklow Naturally AGM in An Tairseach Ecology Centre in Wicklow Town.

ingredients. Catherine regularly uses Wicklow produce in her recipes, both in the media and at her Ballyknocken Cookery School.

A minute's silence was held for recently deceased member Santiago Balbontin.

Santiago was fondly remembered afterwards by other members who had met him while hosting his highly regarded Wicklow Country Berries food stand at various markets.

Following the meeting attendees enjoyed a canape selection made with farm produce from An Tairseach, prepared by Wicklow chef Tadgh Byrne. The meeting was very well attended, and coordinator Santina Kennedy noted that this reflects the growing spirit of cooperation, friendship, collaboration, and support between the members.

The members are now looking forward to a significant series of events for their upcoming October Feast.



Pat O Suilleabhain and Chef Tadgh at the Wicklow Naturally AGM

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Kirsten Myler, seek retention permission to 4 Claremont Terrace, Meath Rd., Bray, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of:

- 1) The removal of a staircase from a previously approved balcony and staircase to the rear of the property. 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 Lorna Bolton Lee seek planning permission for a change of use / extension to a garage granted permission under Reg Ref 20/1149 the alterations will create a new adjoining independent living unit, together with a permission for a new front porch and the redesign/modification of the rear sunroom all this together with associated site development works at No.8 Rocky Road, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We, Comer Group Ireland, intend to apply for Planning Permission for (1) the demolition of 1no. existing 2-storey building, (2) erection of 3 storey single block containing 2no. 1 bed units and 2no. 3 bed units. connection to existing site services and all ancillary works at Ivy Leaf, Rathdrum, 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. The planning authority may grant permission subject to or without conditions or may refuse to grant permission. Signed: Comer Group Ireland c/o Michael Fitzpatrick Architects MRIAI, Main Street, Butlersbridge, Co. Cavan. Tel: 049 4365800.

ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

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Terri Kennedy, Baltinglass Tidy Towns and Patricia Norton Tearmann Community Garden (centre row), with (front) Mary Vernon (Tearmann Community Garden) and (back) Gardai Declan Burn, Bernard Cloney and Garry Duffy at the launch of the Creative Places Baltinglass programme - which will see an investment of nearly €400,000 in local art programmes over three years.

Wicklow Chamber launches 2023 Wicklow Business Awards & Dinner Dance

Wicklow Town & District Chamber has announced the return of the Wicklow Town & District Chamber Dinner Dance & Business Awards on Friday, 10th November 2023 in The Great Eastern Pavilion at the Tinakilly Country House Hotel. This year the main title sponsor for the event will be Codling Wind Park. "We are delighted to have Codling Wind Park joining us this year along with our individual categories sponsors who we are so grateful for their support," Wicklow Chamber stated.

Nominations are now officially open. This year there are 11 categories, which are free to enter and open to all businesses and organisations in the Wicklow Town & District Area whether members of the chamber or not.

Voting is very simple. Just chose your Leading Business and let us know why you are nominating them. Vote online www.wicklowchamber.ie by email info@wicklowchamber.ie or by phone 0860897702.

This year, the awards categories have increased to eleven award categories, and you get to decide who wins:

- Best Retailer - Sponsored by Wicklow County Council
- Best Eating

- Establishment/Hospitality/Pub - Sponsored by Wicklow Hire & Sales
- Best Start Up Business - Sponsored by AIB

- Best Professional Service Business - Sponsored by Wicklow Credit Union
- Best Digital Presence Award - Sponsored by IT Support 4 U

- Rising Star Award - Sponsored by All Shades Blinds & Furnishings
- Best Sporting Organisation
- Best Sustainability, Governance & Environmental Award - Sponsored by Codling Wind Park

- Honouring Entrepreneurship & Innovation Award - Sponsored by Herbst Software
- Honouring Excellence in the Community Awards - Sponsored by Burke Oil

- Special Recognition Award - Sponsored by Wicklow Enterprise Park

Chamber President Stephen Delaney said "I would encourage all businesses, members and non-members to use this opportunity to reflect on their success over the past year, stand out and highlight the strength of their products and services and apply as the Business Awards gives you the platform to showcase your business".

The focus of the evening will be on celebration of local achievement, fun, sumptuous food and great music. Tickets are now on sale - please book early to avoid disappointment by contacting the Chamber Office on (0404) 66433.

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Nine Wicklow pubs close in the last year

A new report from the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland (DIGI) has shown a continuing decline in the number of pubs across Ireland, with the rate of decline accelerating since Covid-19. In Wicklow, 13 pubs have closed since 2005 with nine of those closures occurring in 2022.

The Irish Pub: Supporting our communities report, based on the group's analysis shows a 22.5% decline in the number of pubs in the State from 2005 to 2022 - this represents the closure of 1,937 small and family-run Irish businesses. DIGI says this decrease sparks concern about the future sustainability of many other businesses in the industry.

"The latest data shows an additional 108 pubs closed in 2022, with closures in County Wicklow accounting for 9. Overall, 13 pubs have closed their doors in the county since

2005. Over 450 pubs nationally have closed in the period since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic with the greatest decreases seen in more rural parts of the country compared with Dublin. Analysis also established that the rate of closures has accelerated in the aftermath of Covid-19, with 349 pubs closing in 2020 and 2021.

Although all 26 counties experienced a decline in the number of public houses during the 2005 to 2022 period, the lowest decrease was in Dublin at 3.4%.

The largest decrease was seen in Limerick with 32% less pubs in the county since 2005. Roscommon (30.3%), Cork (29.9%) and Laois (29.9%) say the next largest decreases, with a further eight counties all showing the closure of more than a quarter (25%)

in the number of pubs: Offaly (28.7%), Leitrim (28.6%), Tipperary (28.6%), Mayo (27.8%), Longford (26.5%), Donegal (26.3%), Clare (25.7%) and Waterford (25.4%).

DIGI says the data shows the number of closures disproportionately impacts more regional counties and areas outside of urban centres such as Dublin and the immediate surrounding counties.

According to an economic and social analysis of the numbers found in the DIGI report, economist Anthony Foley says that while public houses play a particularly important role in contributing to the communities in Ireland's towns, villages and rural areas, smaller local markets and populations mean many pubs in regional counties operate on tight margins

marking them more at-risk of closure.

The 6,680 pubs operating across the country are at the cultural and social heart of their communities, supporting social relationships and, community cohesion and social capital, reducing the risk of isolation - according to Foley.

His analysis also cites the significance of pubs to Irish tourism as providing an extensive network of facilities and services. The importance of public houses as a factor for tourism is most notable in more rural counties including Kerry (with 413 pubs), Cork (856), Donegal (334), Mayo (337) and Leitrim (100) writes Foley.

In examining opportunities to mitigate the trend of closures in pubs in Ireland, he outlines the impact of economic and

finance measures that could support the recovery of the hospitality sector immediately including the reduction of excise duties.

Commenting, Kathryn D'Arcy, Chair of DIGI and Corporate Affairs Director at Irish Distillers said: "The analysis in this report paints a stark picture of a sector that is fighting against continued decline due to a number of significant external pressures many of which are outside of our control.

"Ireland's excise on spirits is the third highest in Europe, our excise on wine is the highest in Europe and our excise on beer is the second highest in Europe. We have some of the highest excise duties in the world and the second highest in Europe overall, despite the industry being at the heart of

Ireland's tourism sector and its international reputation as a vibrant destination.

"The majority of the almost 2,000 pubs cited in the report which have closed represent the closure of a small or family-run business, the loss of a livelihood and the disappearance of a high-street landmark. We must create a sustainable operating environment for the sector and particularly those in more rural parts of the country who are being disproportionately impacted by Government policy.

"To address this challenge, DIGI are calling on Government to deliver a reduction in Ireland's extremely high excise duties which would make an immediate, positive difference to the hundreds of small businesses in our sector struggling to stay open."



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CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS 12 NOON ON THURSDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2023 SHARP.

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Members of the Glendalough Athletic Club team warming up before the Wicklow Trail Championships in Laragh.

Wicklow business exhibiting at Ploughing 2023

One of Co. Wicklow's best small businesses will get a chance to exhibit their business to almost 300,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships next month as part of the Local Enterprise Village.

Sussed who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Wicklow and located just outside Wicklow Town, specialize in the production and packaging of branded/own brand rapeseed and olive oil's and dressings for sale in retailers and food service. See: www.sussed.ie

The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) will see over 30

small businesses from across the country take a stand in the Local Enterprise Village in the heart of the Ploughing Championships, opening their businesses up to almost 300,000 prospective customers across the 3 days of the event.

Keith Symes of Sussed said: 'I'm delighted to have the opportunity to exhibit in the Local Enterprise Village at the

National Ploughing Championships this year. This is an invaluable opportunity to promote our products and the Sussaed brand to a very large audience and we're looking forward to a busy couple of days'.

The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices was launched by Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Neale Richmond T.D. and

will be open as part of the Ploughing Championships taking place in Ratheniska, County Laois from the 19th to 21st September this year.

Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise, said: "The National Ploughing Championships is one of the biggest occasions on the Irish calendar and there are very few events that draw a crowd as large as this over 3 days. For

our small businesses this is a huge opportunity to engage with thousands of prospective customers every day and this could have a significant impact on their business. We have been working with them all across the summer on their products, marketing and merchandising for the event so they can maximise this amazing opportunity. There's something for everyone in the Local Enterprise Village."

Some of the clients involved this year cover areas such as kids clothing & games, agtech products, luxury bathing and skincare products, artisan food and drink producers, sustainable clothing and beauty products and range of innovative products from Ireland's best small businesses. Year on year the Local Enterprise Village proves to be one of the most popular destinations for visitors to the Ploughing Championships.

Clr Aoife Kennedy Flynn, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council said: "The Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships are a fantastic showcase of superb small businesses supported by their Local Enterprise Offices. Sussed

offer a fabulous range of homegrown rapeseed oils as well as a range of olive oil sprays, a range of balsamic vinegars and vegan snacks. I wish them a very successful couple of days".

Neale Richmond, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, said; "The Local Enterprise Village is a fantastic initiative from the Local Enterprise Offices. For these small businesses, many only in their early years, to get a chance to have a stand at the Ploughing Championships is a significant milestone for them. The opportunity to meet with thousands of people at the Local Enterprise Village, which is one of the popular stands at the Ploughing is going to be great boost to their business. I'm looking forward to getting down to the Village myself next month and meeting them all in person and sampling all the great products and services on show."

NPA President James Sutton said "It is marvellous to see that so many diverse and impressive businesses will be partaking in this year's 'Local Enterprise Village' at the National Ploughing Championships taking place in Ratheniska, Co Laois from September 19th to 21st. This is a

wonderful opportunity for these small businesses to showcase their products & wares to the large number of visitors that Ploughing attracts."

The Local Enterprise Village is just one of a number of initiatives that the Local Enterprise Offices run, to foster entrepreneurship across the country. Others include Local Enterprise Week, the National Enterprise Awards, the Student Enterprise Programme, National Women's Enterprise Day and Local Enterprise Showcase.

The Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities are funded by the Government of Ireland

through Enterprise Ireland. Established in 2014, the Local Enterprise Offices are the essential resource for any entrepreneur looking to start a business or any small business that is looking for support or advice to help them grow. Since their inception eight years ago, the Local Enterprise Offices have helped create over 25,000 jobs across the country. The LEOs work with thousands of client companies across Ireland in a diverse range of sectors offering mentoring, training, expert advice and financial supports to small businesses.

For more information see www.LocalEnterprise.ie



At the launch of this year's LEO Enterprise Village at this year's National Ploughing Championships is James Sutton, President of the National Ploughing Association with Rose Murray and Kieran Comerford, LEO.

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