



MISS WICKLOW
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MAKE WAY DAY
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ECO TRAIL
Page 12

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Tuesday 26th September 2023 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

KIDS LEFT AT SIDE OF ROAD

The school transport crisis continues across County Wicklow as the numerous bus cancellations affecting children and families since the beginning of term have yet to be resolved. Since the start of the school term, hundreds of children have been left without school transport. Wicklow is one of the three worst affected counties along with Clare and Limerick.

Speaking in the Dail last Thursday evening, Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore asked for an immediate response from the Minister to the School transport crisis.

"There are hundreds of emails in my inbox from families all across Wicklow who, since the 25th of August, with limited communication from Bus Eireann or the Department of

Education, have found themselves without any transport for their children to get to school," said Deputy Whitmore.

"School transport issues are something my office sees a lot of every year and for a number of years I have been raising the need for the School Transport system to be reformed. It is an annual and predictable problem. Over the past number of

years, I have raised parliamentary questions, I have met with officials in Bus Eireann and I have contacted the Minister to raise these same issues and every year the same issues with the school transport system remain.

"However, this year the problem has completely escalated and transport to school for children in Wicklow has been chaotic at best, and



Legendary broadcaster Charlie Bird with his wife Claire and their dog Tiger, with Ger Tracey, Interim Director of Nursing at Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, supporting Ireland's Biggest Coffee Morning at Wicklow Hospice. See more, page 9.

completely non-existent at worst. This has left children, as young as ten years of age, stranded on the side of the road waiting for a bus that was never going to arrive, despite the fact that their ticket had been allocated and confirmed to their parents just weeks before.

"With limited communication on the matter from Bus Eireann and with parents not knowing whether or not their child's school bus is operating, some parents have had to take the decision to temporarily move their child to a relative's home in a different town so that they can get to school, with other parents having to leave work and rescue their child from the side of the road on the day the school bus didn't arrive. In one case a parent has advised that they will have to hand in their notice if the bus

route is not reinstated so that their child can get to school," explained Deputy Whitmore.

"Parents need to be able to rely on the system, they want to know that their children are safe and the current uncertainty of the school transport system does not provide that reliability that families need. The issue of the school bus not running as promised is one thing, and I have written twice to the Minister on the issue, but not letting parents know is another thing entirely.

"The other issue arising out of the cancellations is the provision of the special interim €5 daily grant. In most cases this grant won't even cover the cost of one way to school with one parent telling me that a round trip from her house to school costs €24 a day. This cost is not something

she can afford."

Deputy Whitmore continues, "I have also

been speaking with principals of schools around Wicklow about the

impact that this situation has been having on the

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Pictured is Cllr Erika Doyle with Patrick O'Brien on the Bray Walk for Addiction Recovery. Patrick organised the walk to raise awareness of Recovery Month and promote physical exercise as a tool to aid recovery. A former addict, Patrick now works with Crosscare and uses his own experiences with addiction, recovery and the power of physical exercise in nature to support those in recovery. He was supported on the 5k walk by Cllr Doyle as well as a number of friends, recovering addicts and supporters.

Bella Voce Ladies Choir open night

As the new singing season begins Bella Voce Ladies choir would like to invite ladies of all voice ranges to an open evening of singing on Thursday 30th September at 8pm in Christ Church, Delgany. An introduction by musical director Frank Kelly will be followed by a sing along with a break for coffee and cake at 8:30pm. After the break everyone is welcome to join the rehearsal if they wish to do so or stay and listen in. Bella Voce sing a wide variety of song including Classical, Jazz, Musical and Pop.

If you like to sing please come along on Thursday 28th of September at 7:30pm and give it a go. Contact Frank Kelly on 0864013711.

Greystones Flower Club

Greystones Flower Club are back from their summer break. Their next meeting takes place this week on Tuesday 26th September at 8pm, when Mr Christopher White will be doing a demonstration. It takes place in the Evangelical Church Hall, Hillside Road, Greystones. Members and non members very welcome.

Dementia workshop

The Dementia: Understand Together group in Greystones will be holding an online workshop on 27th September, from 12pm to 1:30pm, where you can find out more about dementia and how you can

support people with dementia in the community. Register to join the workshop by emailing Sinead O'Reilly (understandtogether@hse.ie).

Coffee morning for Hospice

The Greystones Active Retirement association is hosting a Coffee Morning in aid of Wicklow Hospice on Friday 29th September in Kilian House Family Centre, Greystones, from 10:30am to 12pm.

Kilmacanogue History Society JFK talk

Kilmacanogue History Society's first talk of the Season will be on Monday 2nd October in the Kilmacanogue Parish Hall @ 8pm. All welcome. "We are delighted to have Mr. Felix Larkin Historian and writer as our Speaker and we can expect an excellent and interesting Talk on the subject of JFK: 60 years after Dallas. Our Speaker will address the question of just how good a President was he despite the tragedy of his early death and later romanticisation of his Presidency as 'Camelot on the Potomac'.

MS Writers Workshop.

MS Ireland's East Wicklow Branch Creative Writers Group are resuming classes at 11.00 am on Wednesday, September 27th. This is the group's 15th year together and will welcome new people to the group. Classes are done via Zoom. If you are a PwMs and would like to join the writers group, for further information text Mark at 087-2 453 193, or email Mark at mark.mitchell8@gmail.com.

Bray Comhaltas Traditional Music classes

Bray Comhaltas classes resume on 28th September in Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath. Places available in adult concertina and tin whistle beginner classes. Limited availability in banjo, bodhrán, concertina, fiddle, flute, harp, pipes, singing and tin whistle classes, all ages from 8yrs up. See www.braycce.ie for more details.

Recovery month

The Bray Community Addiction Team (BCAT) is celebrating Recovery Month throughout September at 12pm. The next event will be the Closing Ceremony at BCAT, Boghall Road. There will be guest speakers, and a vigil to honour loved ones. Refreshments will be served. For more information email info@bcate.ie / www.bcate.ie or call 01 2764692.

One more chance to take part in Wicklow Town Heritage Trail guided walk

There has been increased visitor numbers taking part in the Free weekly guided walks of the new Wicklow Town Heritage Trail. The walks recommenced on Easter Saturday and have taken place every Saturday morning until the end of September. The Wicklow Town Heritage Trail has introduced a significant addition to the local Tourist industry attracting many international, and Irish based Tourists to visit Wicklow Town.

This Saturday, 30th September, is the last opportunity this year for locally based people with an interest in Wicklow Town's rich history and heritage to take part in what is a very informative walk detailing the rich history of Wicklow Town, from the landing of St. Patrick in 432 to the end of the Civil War in 1923.

This Free guided walk commences from Fitzwilliam Square at 11am and will take approximately two hours to complete. This Trail covers 18 key sites of Historical interest and this week will concentrate on the History in relation to:

- The construction of St. Patrick's Church, which commenced in 1839.
- The story of the Franciscan Abbey, which dates back to the 12th Century.
- The story of Robert Halpin, his personal background and details of his many achievements including the monumental achievement of laying the first Transatlantic cable.

There are two volunteer guides each week, who are fully familiar with the history and heritage of the Town and the anecdotes and stories attached to the rich heritage of Wicklow Town.

On each of the seven storyboards located on the Trail there is a QR code which enables participants to watch a

video on their phone, telling them the story of each key location. The actors featured on the videos are members of the local dramatic society.

The new Wicklow Town Heritage Trail was completed in the summer of 2021 after over 2 years of planning. The Heritage Trail, which is funded by the County Wicklow Partnership is a core project for the Wicklow Town Team and great work was carried out by the Wicklow Town Tourism Team and Wicklow Municipal Council in ensuring the project's completion.

Speaking at the official opening Minister Harris said: "Wicklow Town is steeped in history and you are never far from a historical site or monument. The Wicklow Historical Walking Tour project was formed out of a desire to encourage both visiting tourists and locals alike to get out and explore the town's history. I know that outdoor amenities such as this heritage trail, overlooking the unique and picturesque Travelhawk Beach, has been a godsend to people throughout the Pandemic.

"This particular project, which has received almost €30,000 under the LEADER Programme, may appear to be a modest one. But these story boards and interactive videos tell the story of your beautiful town. For years to come, tourists will visit this unique location and learn a small part of the history of County Wicklow."

Free conversational English classes

Enrolment is now taking place for Bray Area Partnership's Fáilte Isteach conversational English classes for people from new communities starting soon in Bray, Enniskerry and Greystones.

Classes are free and take place through friendly small café-style group conversations, facilitated by volunteer tutors. There are morning and evening classes in a range of different venues, as well as classes specifically for Ukrainians in the partnership's Ukrainian Community Centre in Bray.

The project is also currently looking for more volunteer tutors with experience of teaching English as a second language.

Fáilte Isteach Bray & North Wicklow is part of a national Third Age Ireland initiative - the idea is that people volunteer their time to teach practical conversational English to people from other countries who live and work in their community. Improving their English helps students to participate more fully in society, take part in further education and gain employment. The word Fáilte describes the spirit of the project - welcome

to our community.

This work is resourced by the government's Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which is co-funded by the

Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training

(EIST) Programme 2021-2027.

To register contact Lorna Lafferty on 01 286 8266. Find out more at www.brayareapartnership.ie.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

Road to be closed

L-1970 Convent Avenue, Bray (between Meath Road and Strand Road).

Period of closure

09:00 am 10th October to 06:00 pm on the 11th October, 2023.

Alternative Routes

Via Meath Road northbound.

Albert Avenue, Victoria Avenue and Strand Road southbound. Pedestrian access will be accommodated.

Reason for Closure

This road closure is necessary in order to facilitate Gas Works.

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KIDS LEFT AT SIDE OF ROAD

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pupils. The impact can be seen in absenteeism, increased stress levels in children and some students, including leaving certificate students being late for, or missing classes entirely. It is also important to note that some pupils attending DEIS schools depend on the breakfast and lunch meals that they get in school and if they can't get to school, this vital part of their day is missed.

"The entire system needs to be overhauled so that this doesn't happen again. At the top of that overhaul list should be a central point for communication for every school bus route so that children are not left standing on the side of the road. Recruitment and retention of drivers also needs to be considered with pay and age of drivers taken into account. I was disappointed that the Minister wasn't available to answer the issue in the chamber tonight but have offered, through the Ceann Comhairle that I will make myself available next week when the Minister is available."

Also speaking on the issue, Sinn Féin TD John Brady expressed alarm at the failure to undertake the necessary steps to end the crisis in the School Transport System.

Deputy Brady said: "Over the last two weeks a number of the routes have been sorted, however there are still over 100 children without any school transport. Bus Eireann are going to tender again with these routes in the hope of securing a contractor to operate these affected routes. This is simply unacceptable, and the Government must immediately act to address this crisis."

"The responsibility for this crisis lies squarely at the door of the Government, who have effectively tied the hands of Bus Eireann, by refusing to allow the company to recruit drivers directly to operate local school buses as had been the practice for decades. This year, as with every other year, 20% of contracts went out to tender, following which contracts were awarded, and the private contractors set about organising their routes. But many of the private bus companies are

unable to hire enough drivers to fulfil their contractual obligations. The effect of which is that over 100 school children from across Wicklow, but in particular the areas of Aughrim, Glenmalur, and Laragh.

"Minister Norma Foley, and her department are aware that school transport contracts are awarded on a five-year basis. And that 20% of these contracts are renewed on a rolling year on year basis. And they were also aware that there are serious problems in securing sufficient drivers to service these routes, as this has been widely flagged with the government. This is a problem that is not unique to Ireland, but one which is affecting other European countries also."

"As a result of the failure of the government to address the situation of children in Wicklow, has left the county as one of the worst affected in the state, as over 100 children continue to be left without school transport."

"While Bus Eireann has attempted to work with transport providers to secure drivers, there is



Fiona Coffey, Liz McManus and Nathan Somers at the Wicklow Artists Salon in the Mermaid Arts Centre.

little optimism that a short-term solution will be found through the recruitment of drivers for the private contractors.

"We need to see the government take the issue of children's education and welfare seriously. Bus

Eireann needs to be allowed to commence the recruitment of part-time drivers, most of whom would come from within the local communities as they had previously done for decades, who would operate the school runs while directly

employed by Bus Eireann.

"There is not time for the government to sit about and prevaricate on this issue. They need to act and they need to act now, to get the children of Wicklow back to their schools safely."

Matthews commits to 184 bus improvements

Green Party TD Deputy Steven Matthews has made a commitment to the parents, students and all users who have been failed by the 184 service that he will ensure the service is improved.

"I met with a group of parents recently whose children have been left unserved regularly by the 184 bus. The 07:26 from Bray Railway Station to Newcastle failed to show on three occasions in one week and left parents scrambling for

alternative solutions to get the stranded students to school on time.

"It's simply not good enough, parents had to return from their own work commute, cancel meetings and one parent had to organise a taxi for the group of students while on site in his work."

"Following the meeting I contacted senior management in the NTA and they have brought in Go Ahead, the company that provides the 184 service. The parents and students supplied me with the cancellation and delay dates and I have provided that information for the NTA to discuss with Go Ahead."

"I understand that bus drivers are in short supply and that driver recruitment and retention is an ongoing difficulty across the country but I am insisting

that important school routes in the peak AM hours should not be cancelled. It is not acceptable to leave young students and others stranded when they have school and work commitments. I have made it clear that Go Ahead need to up their game if they are to meet their NTA contractual service requirements."

"I am collating reports on route service provision and punctuality and will submit this to the NTA for consideration when companies seek to tender for renewal of contracts."

"I am regularly contacted by bus and rail users when services are cancelled or delayed. I work constantly with the NTA, Department of Transport, Irish Rail, Dublin Bus, Local Link, Bus Eireann and Go Ahead to ensure

we have reliable and frequent services across Wicklow but there are

times when these services

fail the people of Wicklow.

"The 184 service run by Go Ahead is an example of poor service and I am committed to fixing the problem with this route."

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Deputy Steven Matthews

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Miss Wicklow 2023

Katelynn Elea Doyle Bardin has been crowned this year's Miss Wicklow. The 18 year old from Bray is a student of Equine Science in UCD and a young entrepreneur who has opened a new business this year. She's lived all over the country and has spent some time in the USA before returning to Ireland to complete her Leaving Certificate in Colaiste Raithin. During her time in the US she rode in rodeos, trained horses, won a varsity letter in women's wrestling and followed in her father's footsteps in rugby. Katelynn plans to raise awareness surrounding Ireland's Autism Community through raising funds and sharing knowledge through her online platforms. Photo by Taz photography.

Mental health, vaping, drugs, identified as key issues affecting young people

In advance of Wicklow Comhairle na nÓg's Annual Youth Summit taking place in November, some of Wicklow's Comhairle na nÓg members briefed councillors at the September meeting of Wicklow County Council about the key concerns among young people in Wicklow.

It was revealed that the nine major topics concerning Wicklow's youth are mental health, vaping, drugs, discrimination, public transport, pollution, peer pressure, bullying and the cost of living.

Wicklow Comhairle na nÓg members carried out a survey recently to determine the attitude towards drugs among young people in Wicklow. Over 500

teenagers were asked their opinions. To the question about whether or not cannabis should be against the law, 25% of respondents said they didn't know what to think.

Wicklow Comhairle na nÓg are planning on holding local youth gatherings and school visits where Comhairle representatives will discuss points on different issues

that affect them and try to recruit members. They are also hoping to create a website and launch a podcast with a focus on young people's mental health.

Addressing councillors at the meeting, Wicklow Comhairle na nÓg member Oscar said, "Young people prefer listening to young people. I know any of you, when you were in school, if you

had an issue you're not going to go to your parents or staff, you want to talk to someone like a friend or someone your own age. We have the same thinking and we know a lot of young people have the same thinking. If you take one thing from what we said today, it's that young people prefer listening to young people and it's a lot easier for a young person to

hear from and talk to someone their own age, no matter how hard an older person tries to relate to them."

Comhairle na nÓg are youth councils in the 31 local authorities across the country, giving young people the opportunity to be involved in contributing to their community. Anyone between the ages of 13 and 18 is able to join.

Open letter to TDs calls for investment in young people and youth work

An open letter from the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) calling on Wicklow's TDs to support investment in young people and youth services in Budget 2024, has been signed by 274 Wicklow constituents.

The letter, addressed to Minister Simon Harris, Minister Stephen Donnelly, and TDs Jennifer Whitmore, Steven Matthews and John Brady, states: "We are constituents from Wicklow, who are calling on you to support young people in Budget 2024 by investing €9.4 million in young people and youth work. It is a hard time for young people. COVID-19 impacted their mental health and social connections, and now, the cost-of-living crisis means many are struggling financially.

"Youth work organisations say that deprivation among young people they work with is on the rise, and the need for youth services is growing dramatically as young people and their communities feel the effects of the

cost-of-living crisis.

"Youth workers are often a lifeline for young people, particularly for those who have the least. The wide range of activities provided by youth organisations support young people in their personal and social development, positive mental health, physical wellbeing, job skills and much more.

"The rising cost of living is also placing a huge strain on youth work organisations themselves. A recent survey by the National Youth Council of Ireland revealed that nearly 3 in 5 organisations struggle to deliver vital youth work services because of inflation.

"The Government must provide the necessary resources for these organisations to meet the growing needs of young people in

Wicklow, and to provide an Ireland where young people can live, grow, and flourish.

"That is why we are supporting the National Youth Council of Ireland in calling on the Government to invest an additional €9.4m in youth work services in Budget 2024, to provide more supports and activities for young people and meet the needs of our growing youth population. The NYCI and its members across the country believe this increase is needed to help ensure the sustainability of the sector, and deal with current challenges facing many services.

"We request that you act on this call and use whatever avenues available to you to ensure that we see a Budget 2024 that invests in our young people."



Lucy Kelly and Rachel Honner from Wicklow are pictured with Ireland women's ricket team players Cara Murray and Arlene Kelly at the Certa stand at the National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska last week. Visitors to the Certa stand were given an opportunity to try their hand at the sport and learn more about it. Over the course of the ploughing championships, the stars of the Ireland Women's cricket team inspired dozens of young girls from Wicklow to try their hand at the sport. Women's cricket is now one of the fastest growing sports among young women in Ireland and has become hugely attractive since it became only the second sport in Ireland, after rugby, to offer full-time professional playing contracts to women. Star players Leah Paul, Arlene Kelly and Cara Murray, who are part of the trailblazing Ireland Women's cricket team now ranked among the top 10 teams in the world, were kept busy fielding questions, signing autographs and posing for selfies when they attended the opening day of the three-day event. Pic: Sean Brosnan.

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'Suspension of Ardmore Rovers must be immediately lifted'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed concern following the suspension of Ardmore Rovers FC from the Dublin and District Schoolboys League (DDSL), following the club's protest at the implications of a possible GDPR violation in respect of the registration of players in Dublin and District Schoolboys League, which includes Wicklow clubs. The alleged breach of GDPR is currently being investigated by the Data Protection Commissioner.

Deputy Brady said: "No sports club should be punished in the manner that Ardmore Rovers has, particularly as the club only sought to act to protect its players."

"I believe that the Data Commissioner should be given the space required to conduct their investigation into the alleged data breach, and that Ardmore Rovers should be reinstated into the league, while allowing the club to revert to using the old system until the matter is resolved."

"As a club, Ardmore Rovers has a membership of 880 players, fielding 46 teams. Which gives an indication of the scale and scope of the club, but also the role that the club plays in providing an outlet for hundreds and hundreds of children."

"All that Ardmore Rovers want is to protect their players and get them back playing football. A data protection solicitor acting on behalf of Ardmore Rovers has identified that the system as it is currently configured is in breach of the GDPR. This needs to be addressed."

"I have written to the FAI and the board of the DDSL on the matter."

"It is not acceptable given alleged breaches of data protection that have taken place that clubs are being forced to work with this contentious system."



John Brady TD

"Such is the importance of these issues, I have met with Minister Thomas Byrne on the issue, who has given an undertaking to look into the matter."

Ardmore have reached out to the DDSL and the FAI in an attempt to resolve the issue. But until the matter is resolved the young members of the club will be left without any footballing fixtures for the new season."

The current impasse needs to end, and the children involved need to be allowed to get back playing the sport they love."

Ardmore Rovers' Chairperson released a new statement to parents

on Thursday, stating: "As you are probably aware, this new season brought with it new requirements from the DDSL and FAI for online registration of children's data, including passport/photo ID submission. After we were given access to the system, we became concerned with how the DDSL and the FAI had implemented these platforms."

"Your privacy and protecting your child's personal information are of the utmost importance to us, and we are acutely aware of our GDPR obligations. Our primary concern has always been to ensure a safe return to football for our members and we have been working hard to make that happen."

"We subsequently made a submission to the Data Protection Commission (DPC) and asked you not to register on the DDSL platform until we had more information. Our submission is now part of an active investigation by the DPC into General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies and registration procedures employed by the FAI and DDSL. We are confident that the DPC findings in the near future will vindicate our position and we want to thank you for your support in us making this stance."

"With that objective achieved, we are now committed to getting back to play. Our children have



Protesters at the 'Keep Ireland Open' protest walk to the Wicklow Head Lighthouses on 16th September. Protesters want Wicklow County Council to re-establish and make permanent access to the first two Lighthouse sites together with access right out to Wicklow Head. Many locals use the Lighthouse Road for exercise, birdwatching, photography and other outdoor pursuits as it is a suitable surface to access the countryside within walking distance from the town. Traditionally this walk has been enjoyed by townspeople but recent years have seen walkers being met with locked gates and security guards.

missed the start of the season and now we feel it is only right for them to return to the playing pitches. This involves registering on the DDSL system (at <https://ddslweb.sportlomo.com/>), and we are asking you to register as soon as you can so we can get the teams back playing as soon as possible."

"We know you may still have concerns, and if you do, please send your concerns to the DPC at

info@dataprotection.ie or make an inquiry for personal information at admin@ddsl.ie.

"Ardmore Rovers will continue to keep you informed of any developments related to this important matter, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing a secure and enjoyable environment for your child to participate in sports."

"Our club has a long and proud

history, spanning over 40 years, as a cherished part of our community. We are absolutely committed to safeguarding its existence for many years to come. Thank you for standing with us during this complex and challenging period. Your unwavering support during these challenging times is invaluable. We deeply appreciate your dedication to our club and your trust."

Dedicated public transport policing unit agreed as urgent priority

The importance of a dedicated public transport policing unit was just one of a number of issues agreed as an urgent priority at a meeting held between representatives from the Bray and District Council of Trade Unions and Sinn Féin last week.

The Council met with Louise O'Reilly TD (Sinn Féin spokesperson on Workers' Rights, Business, Trade and Employment), together with local TD John Brady and Cllr. Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien to discuss issues, covered by her portfolio, which are of importance to workers and their families."

Ms. O'Reilly concurred with the Council that the whole area of the health and safety of public transport staff and users requires the setting up of a dedicated policing unit and pointed out that this has been provided for on an ongoing basis in the Party's budget proposals. It was her full intention to ensure that Sinn Féin would deliver this if elected to govern."

The need for workers to have a Constitutional right to Collective Bargaining was also agreed as a priority, with Ms. O'Reilly stating that equality legislation should include the right to Trade Union organising without victimisation of workers. Barry Nevin (SIPTU) pointed out that there is already protection against victimisation for workers under the Health & Safety Act and this could be extended to Trade Union organising."

Discussion took place on the need to strengthen legislation on unfair dismissals with Ms. O'Reilly pointing out that in many cases workers get paltry awards because they managed to secure other work. "If you are deemed

to be unfairly dismissed then there has to be proper recognition of this full stop. A worker should not be further penalised because they secured another job in the meantime," she stated.

Mary O'Carolan (SIPTU) referred to many workers who are working in the voluntary and community sector which is funded by the State but because they are indirectly employed they end up with little or no security and no pensions. It was agreed that the current arrangement was dysfunctional and needs to be reviewed."

It was agreed that most research shows that workers generally, particularly young workers, are open to joining trade

unions but there needs to be proper rights and better communications on this, including with non-nationals. Cllr. Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien pointed out they he deals constantly with young people and whilst they are interested in their future, many are not linked in to trade unions."

Following the meeting, Vice-President of the Council, Mick Ryan, thanked the Sinn Féin representatives for the interesting, full and frank discussion. He also pointed out that the Council was open to discussions with any political party that wished to discuss issues of importance to workers, their families and the wider local community."

St. Kilian's Community School Open Night 2023



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Open Night Tuesday 26 September

Wicklow groups offered biodiversity action support

Wicklow communities are being offered supports to take steps to protect and promote local plants and wildlife with new grants as well as a one-stop-shop information website.

Community Foundation Ireland is now inviting applications from local groups who wish to take biodiversity action. Grants of up to €11,000 are available under two criteria. Local groups which wish to formulate their own Biodiversity Action Plan are being offered the opportunity to engage an expert ecologist to guide their efforts. Secondly those who already have an

action plan can apply for support to turn it into firm action.

To date the Community Foundation, a philanthropic hub with an equality mission, has through a partnership with Government supported more 180 such action plans to bring new life to green areas, quarries, riverbanks, hedge-rows and many other local amenities.

Details of the grant applications are available in the Apply For Funding section of community-foundation.ie.

In addition, Wicklow groups are also being invited to further inform their work by accessing a new website developed by the Foundation in partnership with the National Biodiversity Centre. Online guides, information videos as well as an interactive map of existing action plans can be accessed at actionforbiodiversity.ie.

Announcing both initia-



Picture shows from left Luke Hannon; Jason Coulter; Meabh Noone; Rosie McDonagh and Harriet King at launch of www.actionforbiodiversity.ie by Community Foundation Ireland

tives, Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of Community Foundation Ireland said: "In Wicklow wildlife is under threat. Animals and plants are either under threat or disappearing altogether. We have been proud to work with many communities who are taking action to reverse this emergency. Through our new grant round as well as the information website we hope that others will now join us and protect local wildlife for future generations."

World Cleanup Day nets 120kg in Greystones

Local volunteers braved the rain for World Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 16th, 2023. A clean-up event took place in the Dr. Ryan Park, Greystones. Following the event an estimated 120 kg of waste was removed.

The lead organiser of the event was Cllr Stephen Stokes. He stated: "I would like to thank everyone who supported the event. We had a decent turnout despite the poor weather. It is a testament to the community that people are keen to get involved in positive efforts."

A wide range of items were removed by the clean-up volunteers including mattress springs, metal poles, plastic tubing, bottles, cans, plastic pots, a wooden crate and more. The event received logistical support from Wicklow County Council. Cllr Stokes added: "Special thanks must go to the Greystones Municipal District Office. They provided all of the equipment and agreed to take away the waste. Their support is vital and it is appreciated."

World Cleanup Day is an annual event. It was first established in 2018. It is billed as one of the biggest civic movements globally, uniting 191 countries across the world for a cleaner planet. In 2022, an estimated 14.9 million people took part. Eight events were registered in Ireland in 2023. The Dr. Ryan Park clean-up was the only event in County Wicklow.



John Dunne, Cllr Stephen Stokes and Colm Sweeney at the clean-up in Dr. Ryan Park, Greystones



Jennifer Whitmore TD speaking at the 'Keep Ireland Open' protest walk to the Wicklow Head Lighthouses on 16th September. Protesters want Wicklow County Council to re-establish and make permanent access to the first two Lighthouse sites together with access right out to Wicklow Head. Concerns have been raised by councillors during the year at the closure of part of the access road to the Lighthouses on Wicklow Head, a Special Protection Area, by a local landowner and there seems to be no progress on sorting out this issue. Many locals use the Lighthouse Road for exercise, birdwatching, photography and other outdoor pursuits as it is a suitable surface to access the countryside within walking distance from the town. Traditionally this walk has been enjoyed by townspeople but recent years have seen walkers being met with locked gates and security guards.



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New 'Home Truths' campaign tackling accessible housing shortage in Wicklow

Irish Wheelchair Association appeals for people with disabilities who need housing to apply to Local Authority

Last week the Irish Wheelchair Association launched a new awareness campaign exposing the barriers people with disabilities face to find wheelchair accessible housing in Wicklow and across Ireland. 'Home Truths: Because everyone deserves a place to call home', highlights the experience of people with disabilities in the housing market and the absence of wheelchair liveable housing.

Five Irish Wheelchair Association members have shared their own personal home truths in a series of videos which lay bare the harsh and poignant challenges they face.

For Glenn Quinn (61), one of the video participants, that means the indignity of having to crawl up the stairs to get to bed. Glenn and other members featured across national news airwaves and TV in recent days sharing their stories and calling on the government for more action. See their videos at www.iwa.ie

Supported under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

(IHREC) Grant Scheme the project was officially launched by Anne Rabbitte, Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, in Dublin last week.

The Home Truths campaign is about giving a platform to people with disabilities to raise their housing issues, according to IWA National Housing Programme Manager, Jean Coleman.

"The participants all tell a different story, and they reflect what our membership is experiencing throughout the country including Wicklow. Their stories highlight

the need for more wheelchair liveable housing, the inadequacies of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), and the need for local authorities and the HSE to work more closely together to ensure that there is a personal assistant service in place in tandem with a person being allocated a house," she said. "The housing crisis in Ireland has been well documented but our campaign, shows that for people with disabilities it is a crisis within a crisis and particularly if you are a wheelchair user."

In recent years Irish Wheelchair



Katie Kelly pictured chairing the recent IWA campaign launch with guests including Anne Rabbitte Minister of State with Responsibility for Disability

Association's annual Think Ahead Think Housing campaign has encouraged people with disabilities who wish to live in their own homes, to apply to their local authority for social housing. This will ensure that people with disabilities are included in social housing planning and delivery in the future.

According to the Summary of Social Housing Assessment 2022 there are almost 5,000 people with disabilities, including physical, mental, intellectual, sensory and others, waiting for social housing from their local authority.

IWA believes this figure is an under-representation of the actual need based on several factors

including people not thinking ahead until such time as a crisis arises like parents passing on, as well as the cumbersome, lengthy application process which some people can find daunting. Irish Wheelchair Association centres in Wicklow and across Ireland are supporting members who want to apply to their local authority for housing.

'Wicklow people locked out of housing market'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore highlighted the plight of people in Wicklow, who are locked out of the housing market, in the *Dail* last week. Deputy Whitmore was speaking on a Social Democrats motion on Affordable Housing.

Speaking after the debate, Deputy Whitmore said:

"The Social Democrats motion tonight was about what we can do to ensure affordable housing for all.

I see it every week - people coming to me in the situation of having to return to their parents' homes, commuting long hours and living as adults with their partners, and

often their children, in the same room they occupied as a child.

"There are also those who grew up in Wicklow, and now cannot afford to live in Wicklow. They are

being forced to move away from families, communities and care supports. This is contributing to the erosion of family ties and community structures.

"A recent report from CSO found that 15% of people in Ireland are back living with parents. We have an entire generation of young Wicklow residents locked out of home ownership and unable to afford rent. That report released in August showed that the number of adults still living with their parents has skyrocketed across Ireland, and Wicklow has some of the highest rates of adult children returning to the family home. As of April 2022 in Wicklow, 17,090 adults, or 15 per cent of all those aged 18 and over in the county, lived with their parents. Bray has the highest rates in the county, with one in five adults living in their parents' homes.

"Even Wicklow homeowners are worried about affordable housing because they see its impact on their adult children. They are concerned about where their children will live and whether they can afford to live near them or if they will emigrate.

"In Wicklow, more and more people are talking about their experience. I was listening to Arklow teacher Aoife Ní Cheileachair on Pat Kenny's show a few months ago. She was talk-

ing about the reality of being stuck in housing limbo. Having rented for seven years, she was evic-

ted on a no-fault basis despite being employed as a teacher, and she has had to move back in with her

parents. It is clear that this Government has failed a generation of Wicklow people. This Government

is draining the hope out of that generation. It is draining the optimism for their future."

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Make Way Day in Bray

Members of Bray Area Partnership's Disability Network met up in Bray recently to show support for Make Way Day 2023, which took place on Friday 22nd September

Staff and members from RehabCare Bray, the IMPACT Initiative and Bray Area Partnership shared a photo opportunity outside Bray Town Hall with Make Way Day signs. They then went their separate ways to survey their own local areas around the town for obstacles on the streets to post online using the #MakeWayDay23 hash tag and online survey tool.

Make Way Day is an annual Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)

campaign to make way on our streets for people with disabilities and raise public awareness about the problems caused by obstacles blocking footpaths - such as vehicles parked on footpaths, bikes chained to lamp posts, illegally-placed sandwich boards and forgotten bins.

The public is asked each year to support the campaign via social media and post photos of obstacles in their local area using the DFI's user-friendly online survey tool.



Members of Bray Area Partnership's Disability Network outside Bray Town Hall supporting Make Way Day

‘What started out as a ripple, has now well and truly become one big wave of solidarity’

Sanctuary Swimmers attracts locals, refugees, and other newcomers to five coastal locations

An incredible solidarity-through-swimming programme, a collaboration between Swim Ireland and Sanctuary Runners, has brought 19-different nationalities into the sea at five locations across Ireland.

Sanctuary Swimmer groups, each consisting of 18 to 22 people, including local Irish people, refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants, took to the sea

in Bray, as well as locations in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Waterford this Summer.

The aim of the initiative was to use open sea swimming to bring people

of different backgrounds together and the programme was a huge success.

Participating swimmers came from Ireland, Algeria, Ghana, Ukraine,

Zimbabwe, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Spain, Germany, Nigeria, England, Afghanistan, Morocco, Congo DRC, the Netherlands, USA, Ethiopia and China.

Sarah Keane, CEO of Swim Ireland explained why this programme is so important: "Through our vision of 'An island of swimmers' we believe it is vital to increase the opportunities for people to swim regardless of their age, background or ability. Sanctuary Swimmers is a programme that speaks right to that vision; through it, participants are learning an important life skill, making new connections, integrating into communities and are doing it in a fun and safe environment.

This is what swimming is all about. We are delighted to grow the programme from last year and look forward to the wave of solidarity rolling right across the country in the years to come."

Graham Clifford, Founder and CEO of Sanctuary Runners said this year's programme was incredible: "There's something about being in the sea together that empowers people to learn, to take the plunge and to cherish the moment. The adrenaline rush, conquering the ini-

tial coldness, the smells, the feeling of liberation. Many of our swimmers live in confined settings, some have negative views of the sea because of previous traumas, others may not have been in the sea for years, but because of the Sanctuary Swimmers inhibitions are overcome, serenity and calm is restored and, most importantly, new friendships are created."

The Sanctuary Swimmer groups took place in: Salthill, Galway, Myrtleville, Cork, Bray, Wicklow, Dunmore East,

Waterford and Dollymount Strand, Dublin. Each group learned from a dedicated Swim Ireland instructor and swim gear was generously sponsored and provided by Mayo-based outdoor wear company Portwest. And the initiative was also supported by Local Sports Partnerships in Cork, Galway, Waterford, Dublin and Wicklow.

The five-group journey was captured on film by videographer and documentary maker Clem McInerney.

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Charlie Bird leads €2m Hospice drive on Ireland's biggest coffee morning

Wicklow's Charlie Bird and his wife Claire brewed up a storm on Thursday 21st September, leading Ireland's biggest coffee morning in a E2million fundraising drive for Hospice services nationwide.

The couple, along with beloved dog Tiger, were at Wicklow Hospice just weeks after the former RTE broadcaster revealed he is receiving care at home in his ongoing battle with motor neurone disease.

More than 2,500 people registered from homes, schools and businesses across Ireland to host a Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice this year.

"I never thought I would need Hospice care, but since they have

come into our lives, I have realised the massively important nature of their work in helping people at end-of-life and those with life-limiting conditions," said Charlie, 74.

"Let's have one last push to help us reach this E2million target. There is still time for individuals and businesses to host an event or simply donate to their local Hospice."

Meanwhile, at St Francis Hospice in Dublin's Blanchardstown, Dara O'Callaghan, two, and

his mam Barbara, joined the nationwide fundraising effort.

Barbara's husband and Dara's dad Ciaran was cared for by St Francis before he died and on 21st September would have been the couple's 10th wedding anniversary.

If you have not already registered to host a coffee morning, you can do so until September 30 at 0818 995 996. If you can not host or attend one, a donation can be made to your local Hospice at hospicecoffeemorning.ie/donate.



Legendary broadcaster Charlie Bird with his wife Claire and their dog Tiger at Wicklow Hospice supporting Ireland's biggest coffee morning.

Turn2Me launches support group for parents of bullied children

Turn2Me, a national mental health charity, is launching a support group for parents of bullied children.

Turn2Me, a national mental health charity, is launching a support group for parents of bullied children.

The charity saw an increase in the number of parents signing up for their services, looking for help on how to support their child experiencing bullying.

"Bullying can take many forms," Fiona O'Malley, CEO of

Turn2Me, said, "It ranges from name-calling and exclusion to physical assault. Bullying is amplified when it's online. It follows young people home. When content is shared online, children and teenagers can feel ridiculed, humiliated, and worry about the content being dispersed to a wider audience. We hear about young people who

are bullied by their own friends - this seems to be particularly prevalent in all-girls schools. "Teenagers are already going through so many hormonal and physical changes. Some parents can feel helpless when their child is going through this period. This support group will give parents the space to voice their concerns, it will allow them to meet

with people going through similar difficulties, it's totally anonymous, and most importantly, it will be facilitated by a mental health professional who can give them some helpful tools."

"You are only as happy as your saddest child" are words that resonate with most parents. Our children

are navigating a world that we are not familiar with," Suzanne Ennis, Clinical Manager at

Turn2Me, said. "Our children's childhood is shorter, they are exposed to more, younger. They interact with friends online, they chat online, they post about themselves online. What appears to be a simple Wi-Fi connection can have devastating effects. Not only does online bullying follow them home, but social media apps also promote unattainable perfection, so young people's self-esteem is at further risk.

"Your child may have gone from talking to you, to radio silence," Suzanne continued. "They can be almost unrecognisable sometimes in both appearance and personality, and living in a world that you potentially don't understand or know how to navigate. You are not alone! Most parents are trying their best to navigate the potentially destructive years of puberty. Register for this group and arm yourself

with some tools to assist everyone, learn ways to keep both yourself and your child safe, improve means of communication, and set realistic boundaries. Every parent wants their child to be safe and

happy. The parent/teenager relationship requires flexibility. They're no longer a child, not yet an adult, but you will always be their parent! If you were on a plane the instruction is to put your oxy-

gen mask on first, then your child's. This support group is your oxygen mask so register today on Turn2Me.ie."

The support groups will start on Wednesday 27th at 7pm. It will run for 3 months - September, October and November, the last Wednesday of each month, at 7pm.

Turn2Me is supported by the HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention to deliver counselling online.

Greystones Cathaoirleach praises value of Men's Shed

Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr Mark Barry, last week met with the Greystones Mens Shed to hear all about the fantastic work they do and the valuable contribution they make to the broader Greystones Community.

Cllr Barry said "It was a pleasure to meet with Jim Rice and Michael Richardson, and to see first hand the Greystones

Men's Shed, and to hear all about the establishment and work they do. Men's Sheds are a really important part of our

community fabric, and provide an opportunity for men of all ages, to come together to work on projects that are of inter-

est to them, and to share their skills with other members of the group.

"Men's Sheds originated in Australia, where research has shown that they also provide an essential way for men to socialise together, and bring significant benefits for mental health. It is often said that men talk shoulder to shoulder rather than face to face, and Men's Sheds are a fantastic example of this."

The Social Democrat councillor continued: "however as with any community organisation, it needs community involvement to thrive, and so if there are any men out there in our community that feel they have something to offer, or simply would like to meet and chat with other people, I would really encourage them to contact the Men's Shed. The Men's Shed is located on Church road. And they can contact the Jim at 086 1644981 or Michael at 089 2797334."



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We are now entering into the colder months and before we know it the harsh winter weather will be upon us so it's time to get prepared. It is highly important to make sure both your home and vehicle are properly equipped to deal with the harsh weather that lies ahead.

Winter Motoring

We get our homes ready for the unpredictable winter conditions - getting the fuel in and so on - but few realise that the same rules apply to their cars. Luckily, a few simple steps, accompanied by a quick trip to a qualified garage, can make a world of difference to you and your car.

For those of us in locations characterised by heavy snow and dangerous winter roads your first line of protection should be a set of high quality tyres.

Good deep thread tyres work by ridding themselves of snow and slush as they roll, ensuring as much direct contact between the tyre and the

road as possible.

Having a new set of deep thread tyres properly installed on your car will go a great distance toward helping you grip the road and keep control when conditions get rough.

When it's particularly cold, make sure your battery is fresh and strong. Cars need extra amps to get started in icy weather, and a weak battery that's been neglected all summer could come back to haunt you when you least expect it (say, for instance, late at night in the middle of a blizzard). By having your battery and charging system checked out by a professional, you might just save yourself one cold, lonely night. If in doubt, replace the battery - especially if it is over four

years old. They always fail when it's the most unsuitable time.

Did you know your car can overheat in the winter? It's true, but potential trouble can be easily avoided by having your car's vital fluids checked and replaced.

More specifically, take a close look at your anti-freeze and oil, and if you can't remember the last time you had a service, now would be a good time. Keep your car's engine running smoothly by making sure that it has a fresh supply of the fluids it needs.

And don't forget washer solvent. Anyone who's ever driven on a heavily sanded or salted road knows how quickly a car's



windshield can be coated. Keep it clean and clear with a fresh supply of washer fluid. And while you're at it, make sure your windshield wipers are new and up to the task of sweeping away all that heavy snow, salt and dirt.

Last, but certainly not least, break out the bucket and sponge and give your car a thorough cleaning. A good wash and wax goes a long way towards repelling some of the salt and dirt that can easily corrode your car's exterior. And please, for your car's sake, do what you can to keep it clean. And yes, if your car could speak, it would say the same thing.

It's always worth throwing a few items into the boot for the winter - a rope, a torch, an emergency triangle, checking the spare tyre and tool

box. Lastly, the great safety item of our age is the mobile phone - make sure it's charged up before

you leave - and it's worth checking your AA (or equivalent) memberships - they can be a great

asset in winter.

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Home heating

Now is the time to start preparing for cold months that lie ahead, and to think about how best to keep your home warm.

There is nothing more comfortable than relaxing in a nice warm house while the cold and rainy weather rages outside.

Many of us are dependent on oil, gas or solid fuel to heat our homes during the winter months.

Your home is your refuge against the weeks of harsh winter weather ahead still before the spring. However, unless your heating in your home is efficiently stored, you will not only be wasting money but will miss out on being relaxing in a nice warm house while the cold and rainy weather rages outside.

Firstly, get your boiler serviced. As with all heating appliances, your boiler should be serviced on a regular basis to ensure that it is operating efficiently and safely. The service should be carried

out by a qualified and experienced service technician / service engineer.

You should be able to rise in the morning to a chill-free bathroom and kitchen. From clunky cast iron to sleek white, make sure your radiator stays in toasty tip-top condition.

There are a few ways you can keep your radiators running efficiently throughout the winter. Things like dusting the convection fins and rearranging furniture to help air flow is useful. Make sure your radiators are bled frequently to get the full use of them.

Solid fuels like oak logs and ash logs have been employed for centuries and continue to offer a range of benefits for homeowners. Both oak and ash logs have dense wood structures, which make them excellent choices for burning. They provide a high heat output and, when seasoned properly, can have a long burn time. This means you don't have to refill your fireplace or

stove as frequently, allowing for sustained warmth over extended periods.

One of the main attractions of solid fuels is their cost-effectiveness. While the initial costs might be higher than electric or gas heating, solid fuels can prove more economical in the long run. As energy prices continue to rise, the cost of solid fuels often remains more stable.

There's a unique charm to a wood-burning fireplace. The flicker of flames, the soothing crackling sounds, and the

warm glow it emits creates an ambiance that's hard to replicate with modern heating appliances. It's not just about the warmth; it's about the experience and atmosphere.

Smokeless coal is another option and is specially processed to reduce smoke and soot emissions significantly.

With solid fuels, homeowners can reduce their reliance on electrical or gas heating. This can be particularly advantageous during power outages or when gas supplies are interrupted.

Gas continues to be a dominant player in the home heating arena, offering a blend of convenience, efficiency, and modern appeal. Its rapid heat generation, coupled with technological advancements in gas appliances, ensures that homes remain warm and inviting, especially during those chilly months.

One of the primary benefits of gas heating is its ability to produce warmth almost instantly. Unlike solid fuels that require time to ignite and achieve full heat output, a gas furnace or fireplace will warm up your living space within minutes, ensuring a cozy environment promptly.

When it comes to emissions, natural gas is cleaner-burning than many other fossil fuels. It produces less particulate matter, fewer impurities, and lower carbon emissions than coal or oil. This leads to better air quality in homes and fewer pollutants released into the atmosphere.

Today's gas heaters and boilers are remarkably efficient, often operating at efficiencies over 90%. This means that a significant portion of the gas burned is converted directly into usable heat, minimising waste and maximising warmth.

Gas is not just limited to furnaces. From sleek, modern gas fireplaces to traditional looking stoves, there's a design to suit every aesthetic preference. Many of these appliances can also serve as a decorative centerpiece in homes, adding both warmth and style.

For decades, oil has been a reliable source of warmth for countless households. While the energy landscape is rapidly evolving, oil remains a key player in the realm of home heating.

Oil boasts a high energy content, which translates to powerful and consistent warmth. This means that, pound for pound, oil can often deliver more heat than many other sources.

For homes with their own oil tanks, there's a certain level of independence and control not



always found with municipal gas or electricity. Homeowners can shop around for the best prices, decide when to fill their tanks, and even pre-purchase oil in anticipation of price hikes or colder seasons.

Today's oil furnaces are a far cry from older models. With technological advancements, many new oil burners operate at efficiencies of 85% and

above. This not only means more warmth for the household but also less wasted fuel and, consequently, a reduced environmental footprint.

Oil is non-explosive and poses less of a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning than gas. While any heating system requires proper maintenance and safety checks, oil systems have certain inherent safety advantages due to the

nature of the fuel.

Beyond just heating, oil can be used in homes for water heating and in certain stoves, adding to its versatility as a comprehensive energy source for various domestic needs.

But regardless of how you heat your home, you should always make sure that your house is properly insulated and your heating system regularly serviced.

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EcoTrail Wicklow 2023: Stronger and better

Some 1,300 participants from 46 countries have booked to compete in the EcoTrail Wicklow which takes place from Thursday, 28th September to Saturday, the 30th.



The participants from all over the world will start out in Bray before competing in the 19k, 30k, 46k or 80k races at this year's trail running event. A remarkable 46 different nationalities will be represented.

There are various events scheduled throughout the weekend starting with a gathering at the Harbour Bar on Thursday night where runners are invited for food, music, drinks and trail running chats.

On Friday morning, a tour to Glendalough is organised to give visitors an opportunity to discover the beauty of the glacier valley.

Wicklow Naturally, County Wicklow's Food and Drink Network, is opening a 'Pincho Bar' on Bray Seafront for runners to experience the Wicklow flavours as they collect their bibs for Saturday races. Wicklow Sports Partnership will organise outdoor activities around the bandstand.



Saturday is race day, with the 80k race leaving at 7.30am, followed by the 46k race starting at 9am, the 30k at 10am and 20k at 11am. From 11am, people can follow the race live on YouTube and watch participants running down Bray Head through the finish line.

The full calendar of events is available at <https://visitwicklow.ie/ecotrail-wicklow-festival-calendar/>

This year EcoTrail Wicklow is welcoming some fantastic international elite runners from the US, France, Germany and

Slovakia including Yoann Stuck who won EcoTrail Paris back in March of this year.

Following from stage 4 cancer survivor Luke Grenfell-Shaw who won the 80k race last year, EcoTrail Wicklow brings people with amazing life inspiring stories. This year, we welcome Fatima Painda who left Afghanistan at the age of 12 to escape the war or Hillary Allen who survived 150 feet fall and 14 broken bones to then come back win races all over the world.

"Bray is absolutely

delighted to welcome EcoTrail Wicklow for the 4th time," said Cllr Melanie Corrigan, Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District, and who will take part in the 19k race this year. "The international atmosphere over the weekend is absolutely fantastic," she added.

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council stated: "EcoTrail Wicklow has proven a fabulous tool to help showcase the fabulous outdoor activity playground that is Wicklow. Most of the trails used for EcoTrail Wicklow are

available year-round for walkers and indeed runners to come and enjoy."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council said: "The combined support from Wicklow County Council and Fáilte Ireland to EcoTrail Wicklow is proving extremely beneficial: We have now a worldclass sporting event in Wicklow whose imagery is traveling far and wide with the support of the Tourism Ireland network abroad."

For more information on EcoTrail Wicklow, check the website at <http://wicklow.ecotrail.com>.

Glenealy man part of winning team at World Sheepdog Trials

Glenealy man Paddy Fanning was part of the winning Team Ireland team at the prestigious World Sheepdog Trials, which took place at Gill Hall Estate, Dromore. MADE up of five individuals from across the country, Team Ireland clinched the top spot in the teams competition.

Organised by the International Sheep Dog Society, Team Ireland scored impressively and managed to secure the top prize amid tough competition from over 20 other teams hailing from all corners of the globe including the United States, Brazil, South Africa and Norway.

Team Ireland consisted of Martin O'Malley, from Keel, County Mayo, Eamonn Connell, from Mullingar, County Westmeath, Allistar Lyttle, from County Donegal, Paddy Fanning, from Glenealy, and James McCloskey, from Carndonagh, County Donegal.

Branding their performance as 'outstanding', John McCullough, Chairman of the World Trial Committee, spoke out to congratulate the members of Team Ireland.

He comments: "The standards shown during the teams competition were extremely high, which means that clinching the title was certainly no mean feat," John explained. "A huge well done to the members of team Ireland on what is a truly momentous achievement."

"Competing on the world stage requires many years of training and it's fantastic for us to be able to showcase these talented handlers

and their highly trained dogs right here in Northern Ireland for the very first time. We have such a rich farming history in this country and for the World Sheepdog Trials to be a part of it, is very special to us as a committee.

"This event is truly the 'Olympics' of the sheep dog world and we hope that the thousands of spectators that are set to join us across the week will thoroughly enjoy being able to witness such a great partnership between handler and dog."

The World Sheepdog Trials ended on Saturday 16th September.



Pictured at the opening ceremony of the World Sheepdog Trials, are handlers representing Ireland, including members of the Team who triumphed during the Teams competition on Thursday, at Gill Hall Estate, Dromore.

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24 years of the Thomas Murphy Memorial Cup

Year 24 of The Thomas Murphy Cup, an annual community football tournament organised by Bray Travellers Community Development Group, saw a large crowd attend the Final which was a repeat of last year's decider but with a different outcome.



The Boyos managed to take revenge in this year's final, beating Ballyactive

The Boyos and Ballyactive looked strong all week with some great football and some goals that wouldn't look out of place on Match of the Day highlights!

The community was out in force all week. Young and old watching the games, cheering for their teams and as always offering some running commentary when the moments of magic or mishap presented themselves. Who knows how many balls you'd find in that ditch if you could get into it! It was a

comment overheard after a wayward shot found itself heading for a hedge behind the goal!

As the Boyos managed to take revenge in this year's final, Manager of Bray Travellers CDG Jim O'Brien reflected on a tournament that has seen so many generations come together over the years to connect, play football, celebrate the wins, give out about the losses and come back again the following

year to go again: "This is a festival of football in many ways. It is a competition yes but the spirit that it's played in makes it more than just a competition. The fact that we changed the name to the Thomas Murphy Memorial Cup in honour of a young traveller who we lost tragically a number of years ago is an example of how important this annual event is. We were delighted again to have his family here to present the trophies to the finalists."

Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien is a big supporter of the tournament and remembers a time when he was fit enough to play himself. "I've lost in semi-finals, finals and even missed in penalty shootouts!" he said. "But there is something special about this tournament and how it is so much more than just about football. Huge credit to Jim, the referee Brendan and everyone who was involved. Roll on next year!"



The Ballyactive team

Wicklow archery club receives county award

Wicklow Archers Archery Club has been chosen winners of the Wicklow County award in this year's Texaco Support for Sport initiative. €5,000 has been presented to the club to help fund new bows and equipment suitable for wheelchair users and older archers who may struggle with mobility, injuries or upper body strength.

The largest archery club in Ireland, Wicklow Archers has multiple venues to cater for all types of archery including indoor, outdoor and field. Regularly hosting club and national competitions, it supports the growth and promotion of all forms of archery, for people of all ages, ability and back-

ground.

Now in its third year, the Texaco Support for Sport initiative - organised by Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, - sees a fund of €130,000 set aside annually for allocation in equal amounts of €5,000 to successful applicants chosen on a county-by-county basis.

Previous Wicklow winners were Roundwood & District Athletic Club (2021) and Vallemount LGFA Club (2022).

Congratulating the winners, James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations, Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited referred to what he called 'the important contribu-

tion' 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.

Describing the Wicklow club as 'a really worthy winner', he went on

to add: "Wicklow Archers is an extremely welcoming club with a focus on growing membership by encouraging people to take up archery. Based on the plans outlined in

its application and through its success in this initiative, I have no doubt that the club has sent a very positive signal of progress to its members and its wider

community. I wish them continued success in the future."

Entries for the 2024 Texaco Support for Sport initiative will open soon.



The Texaco Support for Sport presentation to Wicklow Archers Club members: Geraldine Griffin, David Ferrie and Jane Ward, was made at Hillside Service Station, Enniskerry. Pictured with them were Texaco dealers, Fiona O'Connor (centre right) and her son Karl (second left), and Valero Area Sales Manager, Niall O'Rourke (right).

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Mrs O'Brien's new class of Junior Infants at Sacred Heart National Schol, Aughrim . Pic: Michael Kelly

Study reveals vast majority of people want to learn a new skill in near future

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD and Minister of State for Skills and Further Education Niall Collins have welcomed new research which revealed nine out of ten people want to learn a new skill in the near future.

The EU Year of Skills was launched in Ireland by Ministers Harris and Collins in May with a call to action for everyone in the country to put skills at the centre for this year and to take the opportunity to learn a new skill.

Minister Harris said: "We have an incredibly educated and highly skilled population in Ireland, but we can no longer treat knowledge as a fixed asset - nor can we assume that what we learned in three or four years of study is sufficient to last a lifetime.

"Today is about telling people of all ages and all backgrounds that there are countless opportunities available in this country to learn a new skill. The world is changing at a rapid pace and it means skills have a shorter shelf life than ever before. So yes,

I'm determined to drive the skills agenda in order to help support the economy, and what the research carried out by Amarach also shows is that the benefits of lifelong learning go well beyond a monetary value.

"Learning a new skill, pursuing a passion, or taking on a course you always wanted to do improves for your self-confidence and mental well-being. So I am again issuing a rallying call for us to this year collectively rise to the challenge of arming ourselves with new skills, for everyone to take advantage of all the opportunities available, and help drive both our economy and societal wellbeing."

The launch of the EU Year of Skills in May coincided with the publication of the OECD Ireland Skills Strategy Report, which found participation in lifelong

learning here, while above the EU average, falls far behind the top performers. However, research carried out by Amarach found that while almost half of people reported learning a new skill since the beginning of the year, almost 9 out of ten would like to learn one in the near future.

Skillnet Ireland Chief Executive Paul Healy said: "At Skillnet Ireland we are partnering with businesses to bring solutions to the skills gaps they experience, and in areas that are vital for every firm, such as innovation, digitalisation, and the green transition. This is driving business success but also allowing employers to cater for the individual needs of their people, giving them an opportunity to attain 21st century skills and to build career paths."

Harris encourages students to take advantage of new student supports

Only one in four have applied for €500 grant

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD has encouraged students to take advantage of new student supports as it emerged only one in four of those eligible had applied for a €500 grant towards their contribution fee.

Changes introduced as part of Budget 2023 included a measure which allows students from households with an income of between €62,000 and €100,000 apply for a €500 grant towards their student contribution fee. However, although in the region of 40,000 students are estimated to be eligible for the grant, the most recent figures suggest only 10,000 have applied.

Speaking last week, Minister Harris said: "We have been working hard to reduce the cost of going to college for students and their families by putting money back into people's pockets. That's why we have brought in important changes for this academic year so that more people can avail of the supports available.

"One of these changes is a €500 grant for students from households earning between €62,000 and €100,000. While a large number of students have already applied for the grant, there are potentially tens of thousands more who could be availing of this support.

"I am encouraging students and their families to go to susi.ie and to use the eligibility reckoner and take advantage of the supports that are there to reduce the cost of education."

As well as the €500 grant towards the student contribution fee for eligible households earning between €62,000 and €100,000, the household earnings threshold for the €1,500 grant towards the student contribution fee was increased from €55,240 to €62,000.

Students in this 2023/24 academic year will also see the full benefit of increases to the maintenance grants announced in Budget 2023. From 1 January 2023, the Special and Band 1 maintenance grant rates increased by 14 per cent and all the other maintenance



Minister Simon Harris

grant rates increased by 10 per cent. The increase in student earnings outside of term time from €4,500 to €6,552 has also come into effect this academic year and there has been a reduction in the eligibility period from 5 years to 3 for second chance mature students who did not complete a course and are returning to college to pursue an approved course at PLC, undergraduate or postgraduate level.

The student grant system opened on March 9th for renewal students, who were all contacted by SUSI directly, and on April 13th for new applications.

Students attending further or higher education in this academic year, should log on to www.susi.ie and check out the Eligibility Indicator. This is a quick and easy way to see if you might be eligible for funding.

Students do not need to have their Leaving Cert results or to have accepted a course to apply. They can simply supply the details of the course they hope to study and update their course choice online at a later date.

Applications close soon for the 2024 Young Scientist Exhibition

Almost two thirds of secondary school students in Ireland (64%) do not believe the public celebrate the nation's achievements in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) enough. That's according to a study of 500 secondary school students in Ireland, conducted by BT Ireland to examine their attitudes towards STEM.

BT Ireland is announcing the findings of the research with just days left for Wicklow students to enter the 2024 BTYSTE before the deadline on Monday, October 2nd, at 5pm.

People from Ireland have changed the world with their inventions be that the submarine, the binaural stethoscope, or the hypodermic needle. The BTYSTE provides a platform for students to become Ireland's next generation of inventors, researchers and game-changers developing ideas that will contribute positively to society.

There are over 200 prizes to be won and a prize fund of €50,000 for BTYSTE 2024, which includes the overall award worth €7,500. Taking

place from January 10 to 13, 2024, the winners of the BT Young Scientist & Technologist of the Year Award 2024 will go on to represent Ireland at the prestigious European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS). Ireland has a strong record of taking home the prize for first place at the EUCYS, with 17 wins over the past 34 years.

The prizes are awarded across the five categories of Technology, Social and Behavioural Science, Biological and Ecological Science, Chemical, Physical, and Mathematical Science, as well as in a brand-new category being introduced for the 60th BTYSTE, Health and Wellbeing. The BTYSTE's

Health and Wellbeing category aims to promote research and innovation in areas related to human health, medical advancements, nutrition, exercise, and overall wellbeing.

Applications are open to students aged 12-19 years, and all they need to do to enter and follow in the footsteps of the many people in Ireland who have produced remarkable innovations in STEM, is fill out an online application form and submit a one-page proposal outlining their idea - it's that simple! Qualified entries will be announced at the end of October and will be showcased at BTYSTE 2024 in January.

For more information on the BTYSTE 2024, please visit www.btyoungscientist.com.



Wicklow Chamber announces strategic partnership with SSE Renewables

Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce has joined with leading renewable energy owner, operator and developer, SSE Renewables to announce a strategic partnership for 2023/24.

Stephen Delaney, President, Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce, was joined at the Chamber offices in Wicklow Enterprise Park by John O'Sullivan, Project Manager and Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager, SSE Renewables for the announcement.

The agreement will see SSE Renewables support Wicklow Chamber as overall sponsor for 12 months. The agreement runs throughout the remainder of this year and into 2024 and will see SSE Renewables supporting the Chamber's communications activities including regular newsletters to the organisation's membership.

Stephen Delaney, President,

Wicklow Town & District Chamber said: "SSE

Renewables is actively working to progress the delivery of offshore renewable energy to help secure Ireland's energy future, reduce carbon emissions and create local jobs. Ireland is a nascent market for offshore wind with huge potential and critical infrastructure projects such as Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 will significantly contribute to the Irish Government's target of achieving 5GW of offshore wind by 2030.

"Our Chamber welcomes the new jobs that will be created across the county and looks forward to a successful partnership over the coming year."

John O'Sullivan, Project

Manager, Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 said: "Part of our vision for our Arklow Bank offshore wind project along the coast of South Wicklow and North Wexford is to be an integral part of local business communities. The coming year will be very significant for the project as we move to submit our offshore planning application. The opportunity to strategically partner with Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce augments our ongoing commitment to meaningful stakeholder engagement and, in the longer term, to adding economic value through local investment and employment opportunities as our Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 project develops.



Announcing the launch of a year-long strategic partnership between Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce and SSE Renewables are John O'Sullivan, Project Manager, SSE Renewables, Arklow Bank Phase 2 project, Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager for SSE, and Stephen Delaney, President of Wicklow Chamber.

Tender due on Greystones coastguard facilities in matter of weeks

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has welcomed progress on the delivery of Coastguard facilities for Greystones Harbour, with recent confirmation from the Office of Public Works that tender documents are currently being finalised, with plans to out to tender in the coming weeks. This news follows on from the recent transfer of land from Wicklow County Council to the Office of Public Works for the site for the facility.



Deputy Whitmore with councillor Mark Barry

Deputy Whitmore said "This facility is a long-promised and much needed one for the town of Greystones. I have followed up frequently on the delivery of this project due to its importance and I am happy to have received an update from the Minister's office this week on the matter.

"In response to my parliamentary question, the Minister confirmed that the tender process is due to be finalised in the coming weeks. Once the tender process is completed, it is anticipated that it will take approx. 14 months for the construction of the station. While this is welcome news, it is important that these deadlines are kept, and I will continue to stay in close communication with the Minister and the OPW to ensure that happens.

"As a coastal town with an extremely active seashore, Greystones needs these facilities as a matter of pressing urgency. This project has been so long promised, and there have been several false dawns on this matter before. While these recent steps taken are more concrete, it cannot be allowed to stall now."

Social Democrat councillor and Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District, Mark Barry added: "It is very good to have these proposed timelines, and I will be keeping a close on the progress of this issue at a council level. Working with Deputy Whitmore, I want to see the Coastguard station delivered for Greystones. It has been long promised and is badly needed."

Wicklow Library Service launches 'Sanctuary in Nature & Heritage' initiative

Are you passionate about the great outdoors? Do you have a deep love for Wicklow's stunning landscapes and rich heritage? Would you like to extend a warm welcome to new communities in our county and join them on excursions from Direct Provision Centres?

Wicklow Town Library is proud to announce an exciting initiative with Places of Sanctuary Ireland which aims to introduce newcomers from all over the world to the natural beauty and heritage sites of Wicklow. The project, titled 'Sanctuary in Nature & Heritage', invites individuals and groups who share a love for the outdoors and a profound affection for our county to get involved.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, enthusiastically endorsed this project, saying: "Our county's natural beauty and rich heritage are not just treasures; they are bridges that connect us all. 'Sanctuary in Nature & Heritage' reflects our commitment to welcoming and integrating new communities, ensuring that they too can find solace, inspiration, and belonging in the heart of Wicklow."

To kick off the planning for this project, there is an introductory talk on Tuesday night, September 26th, from 6.30 to 8.30 pm at Wicklow Town Library. During this presentation, facilitated by Muhammad Achour and Paddy Woodworth from 'Sanctuary in Nature & Heritage', there will be a discussion on the concept of finding sanctuary in nature and how we can extend a warm welcome to newcomers in our community.

Volunteers, who are enthusiastic about spending time outdoors, exploring Wicklow's natural wonders, and forming meaningful connections are invited to come along. If you can't make it on Tuesday evening, there will be another opportunity on Wednesday, September 27th, from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Michael Nicholson, Deputy Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, expressed his support for the venture stating: "In the past few years we have welcomed people from all over the world seeking sanctuary. This project gives us another opportunity to send out that message of welcome to our new communities. Wicklow's landscapes and cultural heritage are free and accessible and this initiative empowers us to cultivate a diverse and harmonious community where individuals, regardless of their origins, have the opportunity to flourish."

For more information and to express your interest, please contact msayers@wicklowcoco.ie or lrose@wicklowcoco.ie or phone Wicklow Library at 0404 67025. This initiative is brought about through support from the Heritage Council, Wicklow County Council Library Service and Wicklow Volunteer Centre along with Places of Sanctuary, Ireland.



SSE Renewables has supported a wide range of projects under its voluntary sponsorship fund, among them Barndarrig GAA Club. Pictured is Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager for SSE, with members of Barndarrig GAA Club.

Pathless Land: an Exhibiton by Dawson, Downey, Kosmulska and Hill

Signal Arts Centre, Monday 27th November to Sunday 10th December

This project is a collaborative, multidimensional process, begun in 2020 and in constant evolution. Coming from different disciplines and creative approaches, our metamorphic process explores the potential and power for transformation in a rapidly changing world. We spent time where we could in nature, and natural cycles became an inspiration, as well as the concept of creating collections from nature, so beloved of the Victorians.

The work comprises a 2-dimensional Victorian Hang including visual work from all four artists, a soundscape, a cabinet of curiosities and a collection of 3D objects.

Our interactive workshop will create an intimate, meditative space. It will include live, improvised music as well as a deeper experience

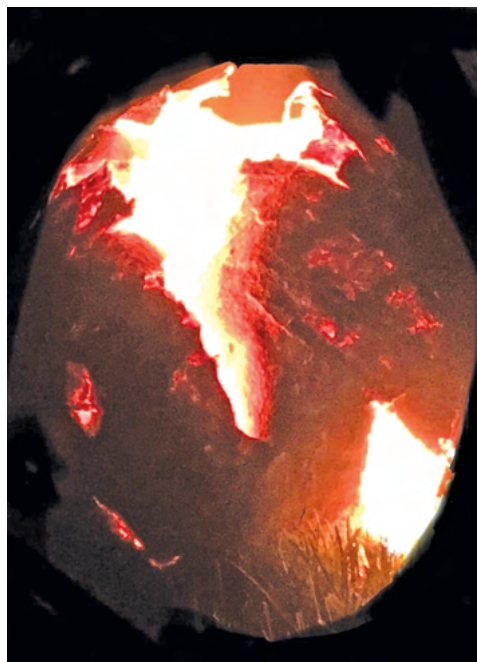
of the soundtrack, with opportunities for the public to respond creatively.

Four key concepts represent our explorations: seed, egg, meander, and feminine energy.

The work records our response to contemporary issues, and our dialogues as we got to know each other. By the end, each of us had

contributed both visual and audio work to the final piece: a wonderful alchemy that leaves us all richer both as creative artists and as human beings.

A website documenting the creative process has also been created: <http://greenhouseculture.ie/events/metamorphosis/>.



Molten Egg by Sylvia Hill



Seed Landscapes by Ashleigh Downey



Pictured is Carmel Robinson (left) with Veronica O'Leary, CEO of Purple House Cancer Support, at the book signing in Dubray Books, Bray, for Purple House's book 'A New Chapter; 33 Years and Growing'. Charting the history of Purple House Cancer Support and featuring inspiring stories of individuals who have faced cancer, *A New Chapter; 33 Years and Growing*, aims to raise awareness of the support available at Purple House for cancer patients and their families when it comes to not only their physical health but also their mental health.

"We are thrilled to launch this book and share these stories of hope, resilience, and courage," says Veronica. "Our goal is to inspire and support those who are facing the challenges of cancer, and to let them know that they are not alone, particularly when it comes to mental health."

Bray Churches Together art exhibition continues into this week

The Bray Churches Together Art Exhibition has been taking place for over 20 years and this year is being held from 22nd September (Culture Night) through 26th September.

The opening reception took place on Friday 22nd evening during the Culture Night festivities. The event used to be held annually but this is the first time hosting the event since Covid.

The event is free to all. The event is hosted by different churches every year, giving people a chance to visit different places of worship in Bray while enjoying the art and getting to meet the artists. All artwork is available for sale.

Mostly paintings, ceramic and sculptures are on display, by over 40 different local artists from the Wicklow area.

The remaining viewing times are: Monday 25th 10:30am - 4:30pm; Tuesday 26th 10:30am - 1pm.

Signal Arts Centre presents: 'Cows in the Hood', an Exhibition by Kelly Hood Monday 2nd October to Sunday 15th October

Kelly Hood showcases her new collection of cows on canvas. While Ireland has had its fair share of sacred cows in recent times, the spiritual nature of cattle and their aesthetic beauty is now captured on canvas in a unique solo show by artist Kelly Hood.



Sheep II, by Kelly Hood

In this show she draws out the individual characteristics of her bovine subjects to humorous, affectionate and dramatic effect.

Hood investigates; The Good and the Bad & Ugly behind 'Selfie' Culture.

'Selfie' is defined as a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically taken with a smartphone and shared via social media.

Opinions surrounding selfies have always been divided. Some believe that taking selfies can be harmful as it could promote narcissism, unrealistic physical expectations, and eventual comparisons. Others believe that selfies can empower, as we are able to freely express ourselves.

I decided to explore this phenomenon further and invited the herd on a Tour of Ireland, Inviting them to #mooselfie.

We hope to welcome you aboard this tour & look forward to showing you the best of our little green island.

Vyvienne Long & Roger Doyle in Bray

On Friday, 29th September The Orangery in Killruddery will come alive with music once again with 'One Night, Two Journeys' with internationally renowned musicians from Wicklow, Vyvienne Long and Roger Doyle.

This concert promises to bring the audience on two fantastic journeys, one to the wonderland of pianist and composer, Roger Doyle, where the unexpected can be relied upon, with the second half of the concert featuring the singer-songwriter genre with music from singer and cellist, Vyvienne Long.

Bound to be a wonderful evening of music, attendees can enjoy a pre-concert dinner in The Grain Store at 18.30 costing €69 (including the concert ticket), or €20 for a concert ticket only.

Tickets can be booked on the Event Programme of Killruddery's website.



Reading Matters - a new campaign from Children's Books Ireland

Children's Books Ireland have announced the launch of a new campaign, 'Reading Matters'. The campaign, accompanied by the publication of the organisation's annual reading guide, aims to drive home the importance of reading in creating a welcoming, inclusive and open society.

In recent months, libraries and bookshops across the country have been the target of protests by right-wing groups, attempting to restrict young people's access to diverse and inclusive books. Today, Children's Books

Ireland calls on the public to recall the positive impact that reading can have on children's imagination, empathy and understanding of others, and to stand with the Irish book community in ensuring that these books can continue to reach their readers.

The Reading Matters reading guide features 286 titles published in 2023, bringing together the best in children's and YA publishing across a variety of formats, from fiction and non-fiction to poetry and graphic novels. Highlighting the excellent books created by authors, illustrators and publishers on this island, Irish titles are marked with a shamrock symbol throughout. Reviews are in English and as Gaeilge, with cover art-work commissioned from the Irish illustrator, Roisin Hahessy.

Commenting on the launch of Reading Matters, Elaina Ryan, CEO of Children's Books Ireland, said: "It might be easy to think, sometimes, in a busy world, that reading doesn't matter quite so much as it used to for children and young people when there are so many ways for them to spend their time. And yet, we believe that reading matters. It really matters. Sometimes, it can be life-saving.

"Reading is freedom - in the sense that it opens the world up to be explored and introduces important ideas to young readers: equality, justice, kindness, empathy. Reading is also freedom of expression, freedom of speech, and it matters that everyone can tell their story and can read a version of their story in a book. Reading matters because every



Fiona Styles, Mary Shepard and Caira Beauge at the recent Newcastle Parish Hollywood themed fair

single thing that children and young people will face in life can be found in a book and explored safely there. There is power in a book."

Reading Matters is now available for free in

libraries nationwide, with a copy being sent to every primary and secondary school in Ireland. The guide is also free to download from the Children's Books Ireland website: childrensbooksireland.ie

Over €1.1m in funding for promotion of Irish arts globally

The Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin, recently announced funding of over €1.1 million for the promotion of Irish arts globally through Culture Ireland's Grants Programme.

This funding will benefit 156 projects spread across 33 countries covering circus, dance, film, literature, music, theatre, visual arts and multidisciplinary projects.

Projects include:

- Circus: following its showcase at FiraTàrraga in 2022, Hands Down Circus continues to tour internationally with upcoming dates in Andorra, Australia and Croatia.
- Dance: Tour dates for a range of projects including:

- Teac Damsa's How To Be A Dancer In Seventy-Two Thousand Easy Lessons at Théâtre de la Ville, Paris (December 2023); Fall and Float by Monica Munoz on tour to Malta, Germany and Norway; Tempo Rubato

- by Alexandre Iseli in Tenerife (Spain).
- Film: Continuing support for the presentation of Irish film at key festivals including Newport Beach Film Festival, California, USA; Irish Film Festival Australia 2023; San

Francisco Irish Film Festival.

- Literature: Irish writers appearing at various literary festivals including Cheltenham Literature Festival, GB; Lit Festival Harare, Zimbabwe; International Literature Festival, Berlin, Germany.
- Music: Support towards 44 international tours across the world covering

a range of artists and genres including Yune Pinku (Australia), Joshua Burnside (Europe), modernlove (Britain/Europe/USA), Pillow Queens (Europe), New Pagans (Britain/Europe), Dervish (USA), Mick Flannery (USA/Canada), Somebody's Child (Britain/USA), Sorcha Richardson (USA/Canada), Lankum (USA), Anna Mieke (USA/Canada), Karan Casey (USA), Ye Vagabonds (Britain), and

Sprints (Britain/Iceland/USA).

- Theatre: International Tours by Fishamble: The New Play Company (KING); Brokentalkers and Adrienne Truscott (Masterclass), Kabosh (Green & Blue); Dan Colley/Riverbank (A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings).
- Visual Arts: International exhibitions by Irish artists including Aideen Barry (Hungary), Jesse Jones (GB), Orla Barry (Belgium), Rod Coyne & Anja Coyne (Germany) and towards Irish presence at international art fairs including The Armory Show (New York), and Frieze Art Fair (GB)

- Multidisciplinary: Continued support towards the programme of Irish arts and culture at key festivals and venues including the Irish Cultural Centre Hammersmith (GB), Irish Music and Dance London (GB) and Tyneside Irish Festival (GB).

'When I Close my Eyes': an Exhibition by Iseult McCormack

Signal Arts Centre - now until Sunday 1st October

Intuitive abstract artist Iseult McCormack presents her first solo show 'When I Close my Eyes' which promises to be an immersive experience, inviting viewers to explore the landscapes of the artist's dreams. This collection invites us to embark on a journey of color, form, and inner reflection.

This exhibition encapsulates Iseult's intuitive and abstract approach to her work, an enchanting infusion of colour and form, translating her innermost visions onto canvas, using mixed media, largely acrylic and even some collage - creating work that dances between the realms of dreams and imagination.

A Bray local, Iseult has delved into numerous mediums and traversed many

creative paths over the years leading her to here in a place of peace and fulfilment and it is here she thrives, translating her innermost visions onto canvas.



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Dr. Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive

French delegation visits Wicklow Town

Wicklow Municipal District recently welcomed a delegation from the French town of Montigny-le-Bretonneux to celebrate the 30th anniversary of town twinning with Wicklow.



Wicklow Municipal District Members with Le Maire Lorraine Merkaert



Members of the French delegation at the Upper Lake

The visiting delegation included Le Maire Lorraine Merkaert, staff and elected members from the Council and members of the Comité de Jumelage. They were welcomed by Cathaoirleach, Cllr Irene Winters, local Councillors, Wicklow Municipal District Manager, Brian Gleeson; District Administrator, Georgina

Franey, and members of the Twinning Committee; Geoff Kane, DJ Kenna and Fergus O'Conchobhair.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Municipal District, Cllr Irene Winters, said: "This is momentous occasion which has united our two towns and regions for 30 years. I would like to commend the Wicklow Town Twinning Committee and the Comité de Jumelage on their success in continuing to forge links and relationships - in building a bridge between two countries - a bridge of friendship that will endure and I hope that it continues to bear fruit for many generations to come."

In welcoming the French delegation, District Manager, Brian Gleeson, said he hoped the twinning process would strengthen community, social, sporting and economic links between both communities. He added: "Through twinning, towns strive to promote their best features, tourist

attractions, well known personalities, historic events and sporting achievements. This serves as a reminder to communities to have pride and respect in their locality. It further encourages groups and organisations to continue to grow and build on a better future for their town and district."

The delegation arrived to a 'jailers welcome' at Wicklow Gaol for the Gates of Hell Virtual Reality Tour. Wicklow Municipal District held a reception to honour the 30th anniversary of twinning while showcasing the new library in Wicklow Town and promoting Wicklow Naturally produce.

The delegation also visited Glendalough where local historian, Joan Kavanagh, provided them with a tour outlining the history and heritage of the area.

Members of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann provided a fantastic evening of entertainment. Le Maire,

Lorraine Merkaert, delighted them by extending an invitation to the group to visit Montigny to perform.



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CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED
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National Women's Enterprise Day 2023: Empowering Business Together

Nationwide Local Enterprise Office events on October 19th will celebrate female-led businesses in Ireland

The Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Simon Coveney, T.D., has launched the programme of events to mark National Women's Enterprise Day (NWED) on Thursday, October 19th. Local Enterprise Offices are organising events across the country under the theme of 'Empowering Business Together', funded by the Government of Ireland in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and Local Authorities.



Elaine Geraghty, MD of Ardmore Studios, broadcaster Anna Daly, and Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council.

Ardmore Studios and Anna Daly, broadcaster and founder of clothing company Little Bliss will share their experiences.

Elaine Geraghty is currently Managing Director of Ardmore Film & TV Studios (Bray) and Troy Studios (Limerick), and formerly Chief Executive of Screen Producers Ireland. She has more than 30 years' experience in the audiovisual and media sector. She has held a variety of senior management positions in the Communicorp Group, the Sunday Tribune and 98FM. As Chief Executive of Newstalk, Elaine developed the local Dublin radio station to become Ireland's first independent national talk radio broadcaster.

Anna Daly is an award-winning TV presenter, currently working with RTE on shows such as Hospital Live and Future Island. Anna launched her ethical clothing brand 'Little Bliss' in 2021 and it continues to gain loyal fans

To mark National Women's Enterprise Day, Local Enterprise Office Wicklow is organising an event in Powerscourt House, Enniskerry. Attendees will enjoy a buffet lunch on arrival, at an event full of information and insights. Lisa Cunningham, renowned business mentor, will MC the event, at which guest speakers Elaine Geraghty, MD of



Olivia Fitzsimons and Brian Durnin at the Wicklow Artists Salon in the Mermaid Arts Centre.

for its colourful aesthetic and sustainable ethos. Anna lives in the seaside town of Greystones, Co Wicklow, with her husband and three young boys, but regularly finds herself working between Dublin and London.

Cllr. Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council said: "There are some amazing female entrepreneurs in County Wicklow and I'm looking forward to meeting them at the NWED event in Powerscourt House, to listen to the inspiring stories of the guest speakers. It's important to celebrate and encour-

age female entrepreneurs through sharing our knowledge and experience. Small businesses and sole traders are important employers in the county and this event will offer a great opportunity to network and make new business connections with fellow female entrepreneurs".

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council said: "I would like to call on all female founders and entrepreneurs to come and join us on Thursday 19th October in the fabulous Ballroom in Powerscourt House to network, inspire and cel-

brate the stories of these formidable speakers. There's nothing like supporting and learning from each other in business, especially for women who are often juggling many other responsibilities".

Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise at the Local Enterprise Office Wicklow said: "The theme for this year's National Women's Enter-

prise Day on October 19th is 'Empowering Business Together' and we want to highlight all the supports that can empower women in Wicklow who want to start or grow their businesses into the future."

For more information and to book tickets for the Powerscourt event, go to www.localenterprise.ie/wicklow or search #NWED on social media.

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