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WISHES FOR WICKLOW IN 2024

With another year coming to a close, Wicklow County Council's Chief Executive and a number of public representatives have expressed their hopes for 2024.



Chief Executive Emer O'Gorman

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Emer O'Gorman said "The delivery of housing continues to be a priority for Wicklow County Council in 2024. 2023 saw the completion and commencement of a number of projects including the Greenhill Road 36 unit Affordable Housing Scheme. We will also work closely with communities in towns and villages throughout County Wicklow in 2024 to deliver on the principles

of Town Centre First which aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant locations for people to live, work and visit while also serving as the social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. Effective place making, with community-based participation at its centre will help us create quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness and wellbeing. "Climate Action is a key priority for 2024 and



The Annies: Isabelle O'Neill, Eleanor King, Lara Grealis and Laya Mooney with The Mollies: Kate Murphy, Rey Jameson, Kaiya Willis and Sophie Sparks, in Greystones, promoting Junior and Youth Musicals' 'Jingle All the Way' production in the Mermaid Arts Centre. The show included excerpts from Annie, Six, Hamilton and more. Pic: Michael Kelly



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WISHING EVERYONE A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Limited Availability

the Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan will be brought before the elected members in January 2024. 2024 will see the Council's new Integration Team provide ongoing integration supports to refugees seeking out protection to enable them to live independently in the community. My sincere appreciation to the elected members and staff of Wicklow County Council for their support during the year."

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, said "Towns and villages across the county are supported by individuals and groups coming together and making a difference. They are the beating heart of what makes County Wicklow a wonderful place to live. As we move into the new year my wish is that these community groups con-

tinue to grow and thrive and that as a Local Authority we support these groups and individuals, building relationships and working to help them achieve their goals. As Cathaoirleach of Wicklow I have seen how the partnership of communities, the local authority and other agencies coming together can impact lives. I hope that in 2024, along with my fellow elected representatives we can continue to harness these partnerships and improve our county for everyone.

"I also hope that 2024 will bring peace, peace to those in difficulty, those who are lonely or struggling. Peace to those who don't feel welcome as well as those who are unable to open their hearts to create a welcoming space, I hope that in time they will learn and grow too. Peace to those leaving unsafe spaces within their homes

here in Ireland through domestic violence or as a result of war in their own

countries abroad. Peace to those struggling with addiction, illness or men-

tal health and to their families and supporters
Continued on page 3

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Painting the town red in vibrant music

In a blend of talent, powerful vocals and altruism, Wicklow's teenage singing sensation Niamh Beatrix, along with her stellar ensemble of music theatre friends from TakeTwo, is set to release a cover of the hit song 'I See Red'.



Niamh Beatrix Smith

This not-to-be-missed musical treat is all in the name of philanthropy, as the rising star aims to raise funds for the growing music department at Woodbrook College Secondary School.

The music video, choreographed by TakeTwo's Alan McGrath, will be available on Niamh's YouTube Channel and the song can be streamed from all major platforms.

Known for nurturing budding talent and fostering a love for the arts, Woodbrook College will receive funds generated from the music streaming which will directly contribute to enhancing the music facilities, providing instruments, and creating opportunities for students to explore their musical potential.

Niamh Beatrix, expressed her excitement about the project, stating, "Music has the power to bring people together, and we believe the change it can bring to education. We're thrilled to contribute to Woodbrook College's music department and inspire the next generation of musicians."

For more visit: <https://shor.by/eL3M>



Jamie Finnie, Amelia Maughan, Niamh Beatrix Smith, Ellie Gilmore and Gerry O'Donnell.

Fundraising event raises €1600 for Wicklow Hospice

Doreen McGettigan (President of Wicklow Golf Club) and Anna Noone both shared their 140th combined birthdays to raise funds for the Wicklow hospice.

It was a great evening for the members and their friends with music and dancing! Everyone brought a dish called a 'Pot Luck' and no one was left hungry! The event raised €1600 for the Wicklow Hospice. They both had their birthdays when they were away on a fabulous golf trip with their PGA Pro Louise D'Arcy. And this was a great opportunity to share their big day back home and raise some much needed funds.

The funds are going towards a beautiful garden for the hospice, to make a calm and serene space for everyone there.



Doreen McGettigan (President of Wicklow Golf Club) and Anna Noone

Successful quiz raises funds for Greystones Family Resource Centre



Rebecca Lowbridge, Carmel Stoke, Nicola Lawless, Cllr Stephen Stokes, Mandy Murphy, Deborah George, and Kathleen Kelleher at the quiz night for Greystones Family Resource Centre.

Greystones Family Resource Centre hosted a fundraising quiz earlier this month at Greystones Lawn Tennis Club. The Family Resource Centre are grateful to all of the sponsors and those who attended. Special thanks was also given to Greystones Lawn Tennis Club for hosting the event.

Established in 2002, the Greystones Family Resource Centre is based in Burnaby Court and Charlesland. However they provides services to people in Greystones, Delgany, Newtown-moun-kennedy, Kilcoole & Newcastle. It also has an ethos of equality, with the local community being central to identifying needs and the development of the service. Speaking on the night Nicola Lawless (Chairperson), gave an excellent account of the wide range of services offered including therapeutic services, low cost counselling, parental support and more.

Cllr Stephen Stokes served as quizmaster on the night. He remarked that the fundraiser will help the Greystones Family Resource Centre to continue to make a positive impact in the community.

Cllr. Derek MITCHELL
"Turning Vision into Reality"

Wishing a happy and prosperous New Year to all in Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole, Newcastle and Kiladreenan



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FINE GAEL



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Dear Beloved Wicklow Community,

Warmest greetings from the heart of Ukraine in our County, "Palyanytsya"! As the festive season envelops us in its joyous embrace, we extend our heartfelt Merry Christmas and New Year wishes to each and every one of you in Wicklow.

We want to thank you for your support and encouraging words! May this holiday season be filled with laughter, love, and the warmth of shared moments. May the spirit of Christmas bring peace to your homes and hearts, and may the New Year usher in a wave of prosperity and happiness.

May the joy of the season be your constant companion, and may the New Year bring a tapestry of success, health, and unity to your vibrant community. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With love,
Ukrainian Hub "Palyanytsya"

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WISHES FOR WICKLOW IN 2024

Continued from page 1



Cllr Aoife Flynn
Kennedy, Cathaoirleach
of Wicklow County
Council

too. My sincere thanks to the community, voluntary and state agencies working in all these areas for your empathy, passion and commitment. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of Wicklow County Council for their ongoing support and hard work and to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and



Jennifer Whitmore TD

a peaceful, inclusive and fantastic 2024."

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore said "This year has been a challenging one, both nationally and internationally. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza have seen incredibly harrowing scenes projected around the world. I am proud that Ireland has been at the fore of the cause for peace and humanitarian assistance during these conflicts. As a local TD for Wicklow, I have spent the last year working with people all over the county, helping them access much-needed services and raising these issues in Dáil on their behalf. As our county grows, we need to see government investment in local services keep pace with an increasing population.

"One such area where I see this is the need for more school places for students in Wicklow, which has been an issue for years. I would like 2024 to be the year of delivery of school places, where parents and the school community don't have to fight and campaign to get a place for their child. 2024 needs to be the year in which school projects under development across Wicklow are completed. 2024 also needs to be the year we see

reform to our school bus system, which guarantees a bus seat for every child who needs it. We can't see another year like 2023, where so many parents are stressed by a lack of space for their kids. We must see a significant investment in health services for children, such as assessment of needs and child and adolescent mental health services.

"This year, I met with Parents for Reform of CAHMS members, who detailed the changes needed. In 2024, I want to see the Government deliver for these families. I also want to see the necessary investment in primary care here in Wicklow, such as more GPs to service our growing communities.

"This year, we have seen some record-breaking prices in energy bills. We need stability for homes to pay their electricity and heating costs in 2024. The government must hold the providers to account for this. It is time for investment in climate action and nature protection. People need greater government support to take positive steps for the environment. We need to see increased funding available for people looking to install solar panels and who want to retrofit their homes.

"We need action plans in place for all National Parks, like our own here in Wicklow, which put the needs of nature at the centre of their agenda. In 2024, I will keep fighting to protect our natural areas. One project I want to see progress is the Glen of the Downs expansion to include nearby Coillte woodland.

"One of the biggest challenges we face in Wicklow, as is the rest of the country, is access to affordable housing. This is a great county to live in, work in and raise a family in, but more and more, it has become unaffordable for far too many. I will continue to hold government parties to account on this issue. I hope 2024 will be a year of progress on the needs of Wicklow. I wish all Wicklow Times readers a happy and healthy Christmas and



Steven Matthews TD

New Year."

Green Party TD Steven Matthews said "My simplest but most elusive wish for 2024 is for everybody to be able to live in peace and safety. Closer to home here in Wicklow I hope that the people of Wicklow continue to enjoy living in such a beautiful part of the country. I will continue to work for the communities in Wicklow to identify issues and improve areas such as transport, housing and biodiversity. Wishing you all a peaceful new year."

Fianna Fail Senator Pat Casey said "In 2024 I will continue my work in ensuring that Wicklow



Senator Pat Casey

continues to be one of the best performing counties in the delivery of new homes in all areas. I will also be working to ensure that progress is made on securing sustainable and long term locally based employment through my work with several significant companies based in Wicklow. As the global and Irish economic outlook is increasingly uncertain it is critical to continue to secure and grow our Wicklow based jobs. In Wicklow's vital agri-food and tourism sectors I will continue to engage with Government to secure increased supports for these businesses which keep our villages and towns alive. I will also be working to amend the Glendalough Masterplan to ensure the central role of the local communities that live there.

"I am also keenly aware of the lack of Dail representation outside the towns of Bray and Greystones. This has not been helped by the new boundary commission decision but I will continue to work with all the communities in Wicklow to ensure that a fair representation of TD's is achieved. I will also be working hard in supporting my colleagues in the local and European elections to be held in June."

Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District, Fine Gael Cllr Edward Timmins, said "We see the big projects in the West commence. These



Cllr Edward Timmins

are the Baltinglass town centre refurbishment and the Blessington Greenway. And that all the towns and villages in the district improve with the help of further funding and the great volunteers. That further new houses are constructed for the needs of the people. That we see no serious accidents on the N81, or any of our roads. That we have an open national discussion on migration so that we all understand what is happening. That we help one another when the opportunity arises. That we don't forget how beautiful this



Cllr Melanie Corrigan

area is in which we are privileged to live."

Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District, Cllr Melanie Corrigan, said "I would like to see in the Bray Municipal District the shops in Bray Central all full and operating and creating footfall on the streets of Bray, supporting the existing shops and creating local employment, the reopening of the Bray Greystones Cliff walk to support the tourism of the area, the improvement in sports facilities for the youth in the Community.

"In the Enniskerry area the building of the long awaited playground for the young families in the area, and village renewal scheme to improve and protect the roads and Village centre making it safer for all users.

"That the proposal to close important access roads be re examined and the views of residents and road users be listened to and acknowledged.

"In Kilmacanogue the



Ireland South MEP Sean Kelly and Freda Yague at MEP Kelly's coffee morning held recently in Hunter's Hotel, Rathnew.

safer routes to schools programme installation as well as the progression of the Sugarloaf repair project to protect the biodiversity of this fabulous area and allow for more sustainable use."

Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District, Cllr Stephen Stokes, has a proactive wish list that includes infrastructure, amenities and biodiversity. He believes that Charlesland, Delgany, Greystones, Kilcoole, Killadreenan and Newcastle needs decisive investment, to catch

up with population growth. Some of the specific improvements that



Cllr Stephen Stokes

Cllr Stokes is seeking includes more public transport, school places, bin & recycling provisions, benches, and the reopening of the Cliff Walk.

Cllr Stokes stated: "As a commuter I know what it feels like when a bus does not show up, or a train is cancelled. One positive solution would be more 84x buses. I will also be seeking progress with the Greystones Park & Ride on the N11."

Additionally Cllr Stokes believes that every child deserves a school

place: "In terms of the shortages, I would like to see the Department of Education make real progress. It must happen."

Cllr Stokes is pleased with the delivery of the new Charlesland Bottle Bank. However, he believes that the endgame should be a recycling centre. Cllr Stokes added: "Greystones is the only district without a recycling centre. Some districts have two. I hope 2024 brings a fair share of resources to the Greystones Municipal District."



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'Wicklow has a lot to be proud of in 2023'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore congratulated the winning Wicklow entrants into the Pride of Place Awards, 2023. A special ceremony was hosted by Wicklow County Council on Monday 4th, in the Wicklow Country Council Offices.

Deputy Whitmore was in attendance, along with Social Democrat Rep for Wicklow Town District, Danny Alvey, who was part of the ReWild Wicklow entry, which won a national Pride of Place award this year.

Speaking after the event, Deputy Whitmore said: "Today's event was a grand celebration of Wicklow at its best. Volunteer groups throughout the county roll their sleeves up and deliver for their communities around Wicklow, every week of the year.

The Pride of Place awards allow some of these groups to be acknowledged.

"To have had four Wicklow entrants receive awards on the night of the national awards ceremony last month was a remarkable achievement. It was great to see Wicklow County Council host a special event for the winners today. It is an excellent opportunity to acknowledge those who participated in their groups throughout last year and promote awareness. Volunteer organisations

always need new volunteers.

"The four groups from Wicklow recognised at the National Pride of Place awards were Greystones Sensory Garden, ReWild Wicklow, Avoca Village and Hollywood Village. They won across several categories, including a special award from the judges for ReWild Wicklow's work in their communities. Wicklow has a lot to be proud of in 2023. I would like to congratulate all the Wicklow recipients and thank them for their all their work."



Jennifer Whitmore TD, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, and Danny Alvey with pride of place award recipients

Community Monuments Fund 2024 open for applications

Wicklow County Council invites applications to the Community Monuments Fund (CMF) 2024 operated on behalf of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The closing date for applications is 4pm on 30th January 2024.

The 2024 Fund will support the conservation, maintenance, protection and promotion of archaeological monuments.

It will:

- Enable conservation works to be carried out on monuments which are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support
- Build resilience in our monuments to enable them to withstand the effects of climate change and
- Encourage access to monuments and improve their presentation

Local authorities, private owners, community groups and custodians of monuments are eligible to apply under the following three streams:

Stream 1 will offer grants up to €100,000 aimed at essential repairs and capital works for the conservation and repair of archaeological monuments.

Stream 2 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for development of Conservation Management Plans/Reports that are aimed at identifying measures for conservation of archaeological monuments and improving public access.

Stream 3 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for enhancement of access infrastructure and interpretation

(including virtual/) at archaeological monuments.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, stated: "The 2024 Community Monuments Fund will provide much needed investment in our valuable archaeological heritage and help the owners and custodians of archaeological monuments to safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public."

Wicklow County Council Chief Executive, Emer O'Gorman, said the Council has been pleased to co-ordinate this important funding stream since it was initiated in 2021. Over the last three years multiple projects in County Wicklow have benefitted from funding for a variety of initiatives such as archaeological research, conservation advice, reports and plans, masonry repairs, access improvements (phys-

ical and virtual) podcasts, publications and interpretation signage.

Application forms and further details are available at www.wicklow.ie under latest news. Applicants should read the CMF guidance carefully and ensure that method statements and relevant consents are included with the application.

Applications should be returned by email to wicklowheritage@wicklowcoco.ie or by post, clearly marked 'Community Monument Fund Application', C/o Heritage Office, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, by no later than 4pm on January 30th 2024.

Hard copy application forms are available by request to wicklowheritage@wicklowcoco.ie or by Tel: 0404 20100. Other queries to Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer, Wicklow County Council via dburns@wicklowcoco.ie.

Council Library Service seeks to attain Sanctuary Status

Wicklow County Council Library Service has announced its commitment to seek 'Library of Sanctuary' status, aligning with its mission to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all members of the community.

This venture underscores the library's dedication to fostering a sense of belonging and support for individuals from diverse backgrounds, including refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants.

The 'Library of Sanctuary' initiative, a part of the wider 'Places of Sanctuary Ireland' movement, aims to recognise and celebrate libraries that go the extra mile in embracing diversity and

promoting inclusion within their communities.

Welcoming the initiative, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, said: "As Cathaoirleach, I am hon-

oured to support the Wicklow County Council Library Service in its quest to become a 'Library of Sanctuary.' This initiative aligns with our vision of Wicklow as a place that celebrates diversity and promotes social cohesion. Our libraries are at the heart of our communities, and this step reinforces our commitment to being a sanctuary for all."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, stated: "Our library service has always been a symbol of community and connection. We are excited to embark on this journey towards 'Library of Sanctuary' status, which reflects our values of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. This initiative reinforces our commitment to providing a safe and welcoming haven for everyone in our community."

Michael Nicholson, Director of Service for Community, Cultural, and Social Development (CCSD), added: "Libraries play an essential role in bridging gaps and creating a sense of unity among residents. By pursuing 'Library of Sanctuary' status, we aim to further strengthen our library service as a place

where everyone can access resources, participate in community events, and find support, regardless of their background or circumstances."

Achieving 'Library of Sanctuary' status has been a focus of library activi-

ties and planning, but will involve continuing efforts, including staff training, the development of programmes that cater to the needs of diverse populations, and a commitment to creating a space that is welcoming and inclusive

for all visitors.

Wicklow County Council Library Service encourages community members and partners to join them on this journey towards becoming a 'Library of Sanctuary.'

For more information

about Wicklow County Council Library Service's pursuit of 'Library of Sanctuary' status, please contact Margaret Birchall (mbirchal@wicklowcoco.ie) or Mary Murphy (mamurphy@wicklowcoco.ie).

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Nicole Lambert and Catherine Noone performing at the Rathdrum Christmas Festival Concert in St. Saviour's Church.

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Commercial fisheries pontoon installed at Arklow Harbour

Wicklow County Council, in collaboration with renewable energy company SSE Renewables, has delivered a long awaited €400,000 commercial pontoon along the South Quay within Arklow Harbour South Dock.

This new infrastructure was funded by the Department of Agriculture Food and Marine under the Brexit Adjustment: Local Authority Marine Infrastructure (BALAMI) Scheme 2022-2023, with significant partnership funding through the SSE Renewables Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 Fisheries Fund.

The new structure, which consists of approximately 90 linear metres by 2m wide of heavy-duty pontoon running parallel to the existing Quay wall, with heavy-duty fingers extending perpendicular from the main structure will significantly improve,

capacity, accessibility, safety and working conditions.

Welcoming the new infrastructure, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy said: "The pontoon is a welcome addition to Arklow Harbour, contributing to the local economy and providing facilities both for Fishers and other marine based businesses. It will also significantly improve safety and working conditions for local users."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, added: "Wicklow County Council is committed to the development of the facilities in

Arklow Harbour as it is a valuable community resource. I wish to acknowledge the funding received from the Department of Agriculture Food and Marine through the BALAMI Scheme 2022-2023 as well as the support and financial contribution from SSE Renewables to this project."

Kaj Christiansen, Development Manager, SSE Renewables, expressed his appreciation to Wicklow County Council for their management of the project, and stated that: "SSE Renewables is delighted to have been in a position to support this valuable



Brendan Dillon, Breege Kilkenny, Paul Ivory (Senior Marine Officer, WCC), Deirdre Keogh Cllr Tommy Annesley, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Emer O'Gorman, Marc Devereux, Kai Christiansen (SSE Renewables Development Package Manager), Merlin Ovington, Graham Cullen and Joanne O'Dowd.

piece of infrastructure for Arklow Harbour through our annual Fisheries Fund. The commercial fisheries community is an important stakeholder group and we hope to continue to support locally based operators throughout the project's lifecycle building on our model of co-existence and cooperation.

"We are committed to our investment into Arklow Harbour from where we will operate the wind farm from a state-of-the-art operations and maintenance facility (OMF) and so it is a pleasure to already be supporting our future neighbours and contributing to enhanced harbour safety and productivity."



Emer O'Gorman (Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council), Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy (Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council), Cllr Tommy Annesley (Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District) and Kai Christiansen (SSE Renewables Development Package Manager) officially opening the commercial fisheries pontoon in Arklow.

New bottlebank installed at Charlesland

A bottle bank has been installed by Wicklow County Council in Charlesland, Greystones. The site is located between Go Gym and the Shoreline Centre Charlesland.

Minister Simon Harris said "Greystones has long been in need of sufficient recycling facilities. Until now, Charlesland residents would have had to travel to Bray in order to recycle their waste. It is great to see the need for improved recycling facilities in Greystones being addressed, and this new bottle bank is a great step forward in doing so."

"Recycling is an important action that we can all take to help the environment, but it needs to be accessible. I hope to see similar facilities open across Greystones to ensure that we can all do our bit to dispose of waste responsibly and efficiently."

Cllr Stephen Stokes worked closely with Wicklow County Council to secure this new facility. Cllr Stokes stated: "I welcome this new bottle bank. It is greatly needed in the wider Charlesland area. I suggested a number of sites to Wicklow County Council, one of which was the selected site beside Shoreline Centre Charlesland. I am grateful to the Waste Management Section for bringing this to fruition."

Cllr Stokes has especially welcomed the timing of the new bottle bank. It can take clear glass, green glass, brown glass and food cans. Cllr Stokes added: "I'm

delighted to see the delivery in time for the festive season. In late December and early January, bottle banks can fill up very quickly. This will help to take the pressure off other bottle banks in the wider Greystones area."

"We need to make it easy for people to recycle. Adding local bottle banks can make a positive impact. This will help to divert a significant amount of waste from ending up in landfills. Instead of languishing in a landfill for decades, recyclable materials can be repurposed into new products. In turn this will conserve valuable resources and reduce the strain on the environment."

"Until the delivery of this facility, there was no bottle bank in the

Charlesland area, which has thousands of residents. Hopefully this will make recycling easier for residents in Charlesland, Aldborough, Archers Wood, Eden Drive, Eden Gate, Farrankelly, Glenbrook Park, Glenheron, Hawkins Wood, Knockroe, Seabourne and more. In addition it will be handy for people coming to use Charlesland Dog Park, Go Gym and Shoreline Charlesland. It's a good location."

"The Greystones Municipal District has experienced significant population growth across Charlesland, Delgany, Greystones, Kilcoole, Killadreenan and Newcastle. We need more infrastructure such as recycling facilities. I will continue to press for action."





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Bray Dart Interchange goes to construction stage

The Bray Dart Interchange Project is ready to go to construction and implementation stage following the appointment of a contractor, David Walsh Civil Engineering.

Minister Simon Harris recently engaged with Wicklow County Council's Active Travel Team and can confirm progress on Bray Dart Interchange Project.

Minister Harris said: "This is a really positive and long awaited development for Bray. The project is going to provide high quality interchange between key transport modes of walking, cycling, taxi, bus and rail at Bray Train Station. Public transport is of huge importance to the people of Bray and Wicklow so I am delighted projects like this are getting to go ahead to create a more sustainable and more practical interchange system between different modes of transport."

"For years we have been waiting for this project to get kick started and it is very welcome news that the project is going to construction stage now. This is going to breathe new life into the surrounding area and promote commercial activities for businesses in the area."

The works that are set to commence include: Provision of underground electricity supply; New footpaths and carriage for improved sustainable transport infrastructure; Landscaping features to enhance the public space; extensive works to the surface water drainage system for the areas under construction.

Minister Harris concluded: "The works

should be concluded within 12 months which is great news and promises a bright new future for the area. The Active Travel Team and appointed Contractor will be liaising with all stakeholders in the coming weeks providing details on each phase of the project and the arrangements that will be put in place to facilitate the construction works and look to work with those affected by these works for their duration."

Reacting to the update, Aaron McAllorum, the Social Democrats' Local Election candidate in Bray East said: "Wicklow County Council must now ensure that construction and implementation is carried out within bud-

get and on time in concert with the contractor."

"The request for tender that was published in April 2023 contains some really welcome aspects, such as provision of street furniture and landscaping, while all footpaths will be renewed within the site as well as works to the surrounding streets."

"This will be a welcome overhaul to what is an outdated and jaded public transport hub. It is great to see that the Active Travel Team and appointed Contractor will be liaising with all stakeholders in the coming weeks providing details on each phase of the project and the arrangements, this should very helpful over the course of the delivery of the project."

Rosslare Line has most timetable complaints of any nationwide

Prior to introducing the recent nationwide new timetable on the 10th December Irish Rail consulted 1,652 customers. By far the greatest number of complaints were from customers wanting increased service on the Rosslare line.

Also high up was 'increased frequency of weekend Greystones DART' and increased frequency of same in week. They came 11th and 12th of 50 items nationally. Cllr Derek Mitchell said "There is much dissatisfaction with this service and it discourages people from leaving their cars and getting public transport. The new timetable has made the weekend

Greystones DART worse by having 2 gaps of 90 minutes on Saturday afternoon and a 90 and 120 minute gap on Sunday afternoon. The service has also been unreliable with no announcement of train times when delayed. Somebody in Irish Rail must know where the train is, They need to tell the waiting customers."



Father and son distilling duo Michael and Gavin Clifford at the launch of their Garden County Whiskey, at Garden County Distillery in Rathnew. Garden County Distillery is at the forefront of Ireland's revolution of independent and craft spiritry distilling.

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Contracts signed for Arklow Flood Relief Scheme

Another milestone was achieved this month, with the Minister of State with responsibility for the OPW, Minister Patrick O'Donovan, attending the signing of contracts between Wicklow County Council and Ayesa Consulting Engineers to progress the detailed design and construction for Arklow Flood Relief Scheme.

Speaking at the signing of the contracts, the Minister said: "I am delighted to be here today to announce this appointment and to confirm to the people of Arklow the Government's commitment to progressing this scheme. This is an important investment for the town and, when com-

plete, will provide protection to some 637 residential properties and 141 commercial properties.

"Residents and business people in Arklow can be assured that my

office and Wicklow County Council will continue to work closely together with Byrne Looby Partners to progress this scheme through design stage to construction.

"As with all OPW flood relief projects, this scheme, when constructed, will be adaptable to continue to provide protection against today's flood risk and the growing risk from climate change into the future."

The Arklow Flood Relief Scheme is part of the Government's €1.3bn investment in flood relief measures under the National Development Plan. Wicklow County Council, funded by the Office of Public Works (OPW), will undertake engineering works along the Avoca River and surrounds to mitigate the risk of flooding in the Arklow town area in County Wicklow.

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council expressed her delight at this significant milestone in the progression of the scheme, stating: "Without intervention, Arklow faces the continued onset of the range of issues that are associated with flooding including tangible and intangible flood damage to private and public property including infrastructure services, exten-

sive community disruption, health and safety issues and development restrictions."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, thanked the Minister for the significant funding of c.€57m and welcomed the progression in the scheme saying: "I am delighted for the people and businesses of Arklow that we have reached this key milestone. The aim of this scheme which is based on technical, socio-economic and environmental criteria will minimise risks to the community against flooding and will strive to enhance the town's landscape with social amenities and character."

The overall objectives and benefits of the proposed Scheme are:

- To provide flood relief measures along the River Avoca and estuary to alleviate flooding.
- To protect residential and non-residential properties from flooding and consequential damage
- To protect infrastructural utility services from flood damage
- To improve the health and safety of the community in high flood risk areas through direct protection from flooding and through reduction of stress and anxiety
- To reduce disruption and disturbance caused by flood events such as

evacuations and traffic diversions

• To reduce the risk of environmental pollution such as runoff from hydrocarbons from flooded areas

• To provide the basis for the appropriate maintenance of the Avoca River at Arklow.

Breege Kilkenney, Director of Services, Wicklow County Council, noted that: "Wicklow County Council has recently finished public consultation with the community on its draft Climate Action Plan, which includes adaptation actions required to address potentially worsening flood events having regard to current climate change predictions. These improved flood defences are needed to protect the homes and businesses in Arklow town from current and future extreme weather events."

Cllr Tommy Annesley, Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District, expressed his satisfaction at the scheme's progress, noting that the objective will be to protect the low lying areas of the town that are impacted during flood events from the Avoca River and the sea and will greatly increase public confidence that their homes and businesses will be protected in the future even during severe weather."



Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy 9Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Senator Pat Casey, Minister Simon Harris, Cllr Tommy Annesley, Michael Looby (Ayesa Consulting Engineers), Patrick O'Donovan TD, Minister of State with responsibility for the OPW, and WCC Chief Executive Emer O'Gorman at the signing of the consultants contracts for the Arklow Flood Relief Scheme.

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Bring your Christmas Tree to any of the collection points below. They will be shredded, composted and used again!

The Christmas tree collection service is a free service for households (domestic) only. Up to two trees per household. No commercial collectors. Litter fines will be issued to those depositing trees outside the times specified and to individuals or other entities operating unauthorised collections.

NO WREATHS, PLASTIC TREES OR DECORATIONS PLEASE.

Town	Location	Collection Dates	Operating Times for Acceptance of Christmas Trees
Arklow	Arklow Recycling Centre, Croghan Industrial Estate, Emoclew Road, Arklow	3 rd to 17 th January 2024	Monday to Thursday: 9.00am – 4.00pm Friday: 9.00am – 3.00pm Saturday: 9.00am – 1.00 pm
Avoca	Avoca Recycling Centre	3 rd to 17 th January 2024	Tuesday to Thursday: 9.00am – 4.00pm Friday: 9.00am – 3.00pm Saturday: 9.30am – 1.00pm (closed for lunch 1-2pm each day)
Baltinglass	Rampere Recycling Centre, Rampere Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow	3 rd to 17 th January 2024	Monday to Thursday: 8.30am – 4.00pm Friday: 8.30 am – 3:30pm Saturday: 8.30am – 1pm
Blessington	County Council Yard, Naas Road	3 rd to 17 th January 2024	Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4 pm
Bray	Bray Recycling Centre, Beechwood Close, Boghall Road, Bray	3 rd to 17 th January 2024	Monday to Thursday: 9.00am – 4.00pm Friday: 9.00am – 3.00pm Saturday: 9.00am – 1.30pm
Greystones	Carpark to front of the Council Offices on Mill Road adjacent to the bottle banks	3 rd to 17 th January 2024	Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4 pm Saturday: 9.00am - 1:pm
Wicklow	The Murrough Recycling Centre, Wicklow Town	3 rd to 17 th January 2024	Monday to Thursday: 9.00am – 4.00pm Friday: 9.00am – 3.00pm Saturday: 9.00am – 1.45pm (closed for lunch 1-1.45pm each day)

Christmas 2023 / 2024 Opening & Closing Times Wicklow County Council Recycling Centres

	Arklow	Avoca	Bray	Wicklow Town	Rampere, Baltinglass
Friday 22 nd December	9:00am -3:30pm	9.00am – 4:00pm (closed for lunch 1pm-2pm)	9:00am – 4:00pm	9.00am – 3.30pm (closed for lunch 1pm – 1.45pm)	9:00am 3:30pm
Saturday 23 rd December	9:00am -1:45pm	9:00am -1:45pm	9:00am -1:45pm	9:00am -1:45pm	8:30am -1pm
Sunday - Christmas Eve	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday - Christmas Day	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Tuesday - St. Stephens Day	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Wednesday 27 th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Thursday 28 th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday 29 th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	8:30am - 1 pm
Saturday 30 th December	9:00am -1:45pm	9:00am -1:45pm	9:00am -1:45pm	9:00am -1:45pm	8:30am -1pm
Sunday 31 st December New Year's Eve	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday 01 st January 2024 New Year's Day	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 nd January 2024	9.00am – 4.30pm	9.00am – 4.00pm (closed for lunch 1-2pm)	9:00am - 4pm	9.00am – 4.30pm (closed for lunch 1pm – 1.45pm)	8.30am – 4:00pm

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Cllr Pat Kennedy, Seamus O'Toole, Daphine Cullen, Karen Kelly and Olivia Cullen at the recent Rathdrum Christmas Festival Concert in St. Saviour's Church.

Dinner 2050: Future of Food in Ireland

Wicklow Chef, Tadhg Byrne, and Dublin Filmmaker, Max Barry, celebrated the launch of their film 'Dinner 2050: Future of Food in Ireland' with a premiere earlier this month. The screening took place in the cinema at UCD, Belfield. Guests were treated to a cocktail reception with canapes from WithTaste, and Fercullen Irish Whiskey cocktails provided by The Powerscourt Distillery. Music was provided by Wicklow harpist Rachel Duffy.

During the reception Tadhg, who was the Executive Producer on the film, explained his motivations for creating the piece. Having previously produced a series on the History of Irish Food which was screened on St Patrick's Day Festival TV, and a further series on contemporary Irish food, he was keen to ask the questions about what Ireland's food future holds. Tadhg also runs Críoch Catering, a Wicklow based catering company which specialises in featuring local, seasonal and sustainable produce.

The independently produced film is a 1 hour documentary exploring how Ireland will eat in 2050 - looking at issues such as how technology will change farming, food security, robot chefs, drone deliveries and sustainability in the food supply chain. Tadhg

Byrne and Max Barry hope that the film will reach a large audience in 2024. Max thanked the donors who had made the film possible through their Go-fund me page which is still welcoming donations to cover production costs <https://www.gofundme.com/f/film-about-the-future-of-food-in-ireland>. Tadhg thanked Broadline Recruitment Group for sponsorship for the premiere. Broadline Recruitment said they were delighted to get involved in providing a platform for such an important topic. Santina Kennedy, who is the former coordinator of the Wicklow Naturally, Wicklow's food and drink network, praised the film, saying that it gives viewers a voice in the conversation about the future of our food systems.

Contributors to the film included

Tom Burgess who is a dairy farmer and award winning cheese maker from Coolattin. Margaret Hctor, Lamb farmer from Kilmullen Farm, Wicklow; Niall Sabongi, Restaurateur and owner of Sustainable Seafood Ireland; and JP McMahon, Michelin Star Chef, Food Historian and author, along with many other notable contributors from the Irish food industry.

The screening was really well received by the audience which included many food journalists, sustainability activists, food, drink and hospitality lecturers from TU Dublin and well known faces from the Irish food and drink scene, as well as several Wicklow based farmers and food producers. Further screenings will take place in Wicklow and nationwide in 2024.

David McSavage: If That Makes Sense

Whale Theatre, Friday 29th December, 8pm (doors 7pm).
Sold Out but register at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for any returns.

"If that a makes sense" - Common Phrase. When you say something but you aren't sure if you explained it well and the other person understood it.

David McSavage is stand-up comedy's answer to spontaneous human combustion, an explosive and always surprising phenomenon that simply cannot be contained in a box or transposed to TV.

His new show is a unique blend of energy, improvisation, and leaps of imagination that take his audience on a joyride they'll never forget. Even David has no idea what might happen when he unleashes his crazy brand of improvised comedy mayhem. He possesses the rare gift of creating a space where audiences feel like they are kids again, all taking part in a practical joke.

Age Guidance: 18+ event



Joe the Magician - Live

Whale Theatre, Saturday 30th December, 11am (doors 10.30am) & 1.30pm (doors 1pm) & 4pm (doors 3.30pm).
Sold Out but register at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for any returns.

It's Joe the Magician from RTÉjr! And he's bringing his spectacular children's comedy magic and illusion show back to The Whale for three performances.

Joe's show fuses laugh out loud comedy magic with absolutely jaw dropping spectacular illusions live on stage. It's a rollercoaster theatrical ride that reinvents children's entertainment.

Tables will fly, a friendly ghost will magically fly into the audience and charm kids and grownups alike! Joe will even make it snow live on stage! That's just for starters!

Joe's hugely popular TV show 'abraKIDabra' has been one of the most watched shows on RTÉjr and on the RTÉ player and now Joe stars in his new educational comedy show 'Dizzy Deliveries' where Joe is a magical delivery man.



Water, Light and Reflection: An Exhibition by Emanuela Carvisiglia

Signal Arts Centre, Tuesday 19th March to Sunday 31st March 2024

"Water, Light and Reflection" is a captivating ensemble of oils with the interaction between water and light as a common theme. Artist Emanuela Carvisiglia's goal is to paint colourful and very detailed pieces to bring the viewer into a dimension where the warmth of the sun is amplified by the freshness of the water and to do so she uses intense colours and a high level of detail.

Emanuela says, "I hope the viewers eyes will be enthralled by the colours and their souls will be nurtured by the same feeling of peace and relaxation I have while creating them. I try to create a synergy between the full picture and the small details I am so obsessed with."

Emanuela was born and raised in Italy and now lives in Wicklow where she is inspired by the sea and the way light plays with the water surface. She aims to produce captivating pieces of work where colours and shapes are reinterpreted by reflections and light refraction.

She has a degree in painting and visual arts from the Fine Art Academy in Naples where she had the chance to learn from renowned contemporary Italian artists.



'Mediterraneo' (left) and 'Pebbles can be Jewels' (right) by Emanuela Carvisiglia

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Avoca ICA make Fidget Blankets for St. Colman's residents

On Wednesday, 12th December, two members of Avoca ICA presented 10 Fidget Blankets to Deirdre Phelan, Director of Nursing at St Colman's Residential Care Centre, Rathdrum. These blankets were made by Avoca ICA members, for the St. Colmans residents.



Avoca ICA members working on the fidget blankets

The idea for making these blankets came after one of Avoca ICA's past members offered up some material which had belonged to her Granny. To celebrate her Gran the group decided to make Fidget Blankets for Alzheimer sufferers. These were produced at their Craft Mornings, which are held in Hartin Hall, Avoca, three Thursdays of the month. A lot of work and effort went in to making these blankets.

When they were presented to Deirdre she was absolutely delighted with the Fidget Blankets and assured the members of Avoca ICA that they would be much appreciated by the St. Colman's residents.



Pictured left to right are Brigid O'Grady - Avoca ICA, Deirdre Phelan - St Colman's, and Valerie McGee, Avoca ICA, with the fidget blankets made by members of Avoca ICA

Tiglin sleepout raises €21,000 for homeless

Tiglin hosted a Christmas Sleepout in Greystones on Friday, December 15th, 2023. The event raised over €21,000, in support of the homeless. In the run up to the event Tiglin highlighted that there would be nearly 4000 children homeless over Christmas.

On the night hundreds of people gathered at the marquee in the Marina, Greystones, which is also serving as the Christmas on the Plaza Market.

There were multiple performances from musicians including Luke Carrig, Gavin Murphy and Paddy Casey. Following the performances a Christmas movie was screened.

Also in attendance was the new Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District, Cllr Stephen Stokes who addressed the sleepout event to praise all involved. Speaking about the event Cllr Stokes stated: "It was a great honour to support the event, and show solidarity with the homeless. I would like to commend

Tiglin for organising the sleepout. There was a great vibe, as people rallied for a good cause. It is a testament to all of the coordinators, volunteers and performers that it was such a success. The funds raised will support many people facing great difficulty."

Tiglin is a registered charity that helps people overcome addiction and

homelessness. They have assisted hundreds of people and their families in improving their lives. Tiglin provides residential rehabilitation programmes and transitional assistance for men and women in addiction or homelessness. Their rehabilitation programmes take an evidence-based holistic approach to deal with

addiction. Tiglin also seeks to equip people in their care with personal and professional skills to help people return to life in society. This means training people and giving them skills, ranging from courses in further education, qualifying employment certificates, counselling, parenting skills, and family therapy to barista training in their social enterprise café. Rise at the Cove in Greystones is one of their facilities making a positive difference.

Additionally Tiglin operate a number of centres throughout Leinster. On the same evening as the sleepout, Tiglin at the Lighthouse in Dublin City experienced its record day, where over 450 people came in to avail of the evening service alone. Many people had to be turned away because the facility was unable to cope with such high numbers.

This influx comes as a result of the single asylum seekers who are referred to Tiglin's service and who are no longer accommodated by the International Protection Office.

Cllr Stokes announced that he is not sending any Christmas cards in 2023. Instead he has made a charitable donation to Tiglin. Cllr Stokes is urging further support for homeless services. He also commended the continued efforts of Tiglin and other organisations that work closely with the homeless.

Cllr Stokes concluded: "Thank goodness for services like Tiglin. Many people would be lost without them."



Gavin Murphy from the Rise at the Cove Cafe, Cllr Stephen Stokes, and Jay Bobinac at the Tiglin Christmas Sleepout



Cllr Stokes with Paddy Casey at the Tiglin sleepout.



Arklow Chamber President Paul Lynch made a presentation to the Wicklow Hospice for a charity collection that was made at the Chamber Ball. The Wicklow Hospice was nominated as the worthy recipient. "On behalf of the Arklow and District Chamber of Commerce we are delighted to present a cheque for €2500 to the Wicklow Hospice," said Mr Lynch. "As our nominated Charity for the Chamber Ball Raffle we are delighted to be able to support the great work the team do. We would also like to recognise the generosity of our member."

Community Climate Action Programme launched

Wicklow County Council has launched a new Community Climate Action Programme. A fund of €646,000 is being made available to organisations and community groups in County Wicklow who are interested in developing projects and initiatives which relate to the challenge of addressing climate change.

This fund has three Primary Objectives; Reduce greenhouse gas emissions; Build Climate Resilience; Help communities transition to a lower carbon economy.

Projects are eligible for 100 per cent funding, up to a maximum of €100,000. Applications can be made by email to ccap@wicklowcoco.ie under any or all of the following five themes: Community & Energy, Climate & Environment, Shopping & Recycling, Food and Waste and Travel.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, welcomed the programme, stating: "Community action is at the heart of how we make Wicklow a more sustainable and liveable county. This funding supports

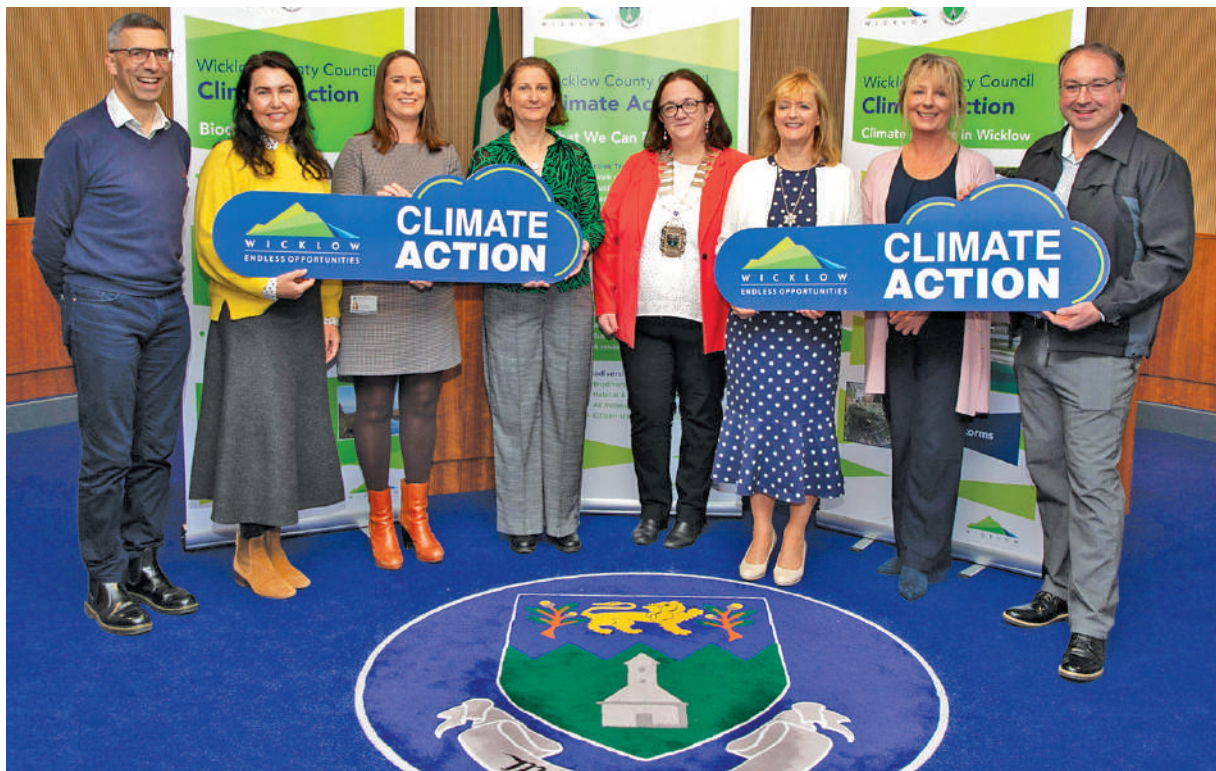
community groups to provide leadership within their communities in addressing climate related challenges at a local level."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, acknowledged the foresight of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications in providing this funding saying: "The Community Climate Action programme will see an investment of €646,000 for County Wicklow and presents a genuine opportunity for communities to avail of financial support while they implement climate action in their local area and build low carbon communities in a considered and structured way."

Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services, Wicklow County Council,

welcomed the funding programme, noting that: "Wicklow County Council has recently finished public consultation with the community on its draft Climate Action Plan. The plan highlights how communities can benefit from the low carbon transition. This means warmer, more efficient homes; better travel options, more liveable towns and cities, more sustainable consumer choices and a better environment for future generations."

Cllr Lourda Scott, Cathaoirleach of the Climate and Biodiversity Action Strategic Policy Committee, added: "This substantial new fund will help our community partners put their plans into practice and help us achieve our climate change goals."



Marc Devereux, Julie Sammler, CEO of Wicklow County Council Emer O'Gorman, Cllr Lourda Scott, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Apoife Flynn Kennedy, Breege Kilkenny, Jackie Carroll and Mark Costello at the launch of the Community Climate Action Fund in Council Buildings, Wicklow Town.

Significant progress on Active Travel Projects

Six Active Travel Projects have been completed while six others are significantly progressed. In February of this year, over E8 million was allocated from the National Transport Authority to fund Active Travel Projects across Wicklow.

This investment was dedicated to projects that develop new and improved walking and cycling infrastructures including the development of segregated cycles lanes and widened footpaths, new walking and cycling bridges and new pedestrian crossings.

As of December 12 Wicklow Active Travel Projects have been progressed with half of them already completed.

Minister Harris said: "Active Travel Projects and the investment from Government in these projects are of huge importance to me and to the people of Wicklow who benefit from these schemes that seek to improve walking and cycling infrastructure throughout the county."

"As an avid walker, I see the direct benefit from these projects and the life they inject into communities and villages."

The six completed Wicklow Active Travel projects are:

- **Footpath Improvements at Deputy's Pass, Glenealy (Arklow MD).** This scheme provides for 511m of upgraded footpaths with public lighting along the R-752 between Deputy's Pass and Glenealy Railway Bridge.

- **Footpath Improvements at Valley Heights, Carnew (Balinglass MD).** This scheme provides

for 161m of upgraded footpaths (including public lighting) along the L-72274 between Valley Heights Housing Estate and Carnew National School.

- **Improved Glenart pedestrian link (Arklow MD).** This Pedestrian accessibility link has now been improved at the rear of the Woodlands housing development located between Lamberton and Glenart. The works involved the construction of a pedestrian access ramp, handrails and the installation of public lighting.

- **Ashford to New Developments footpath (Wicklow MD).** This project sought to improve pedestrian facilities along the R-764 by widening the footpath and upgrading the public lighting.

- **Priory Road Footpath (Greystones MD).** This project included the provision of new footpath on Priory Road, Delgany linking the new Archers Wood and Eden Gate developments to Delgany village.

- **Arklow North Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme (Arklow MD).** This project included the construction of cycle and pedestrian facilities on the R-772 Dublin Road.

The scheme involves construction of a footpath and segregated cycle facilities on the R-772 between the M11 Junction 11.

Wicklow County Council have been working very hard on a number of other projects which are very significantly progressed, these include:

- **Improvement works at Bellevue Junction in Delgany (Greystones MD).** This project includes the upgrading of the junction of the R-762 and Bellevue Hill. The project will improve pedestrian accessibility and safety and enhance village centre aesthetics by widening and landscaping the paved pedestrian areas, upgrading public transport facilities, undergrounding services, and upgrading public lighting. Surfacing was recently completed here.

- **Improvements on Kilcoole Road Pedestrian and Cycle routes (Greystones MD).** This project includes the provision of 500m of new footpath and 500m of cycle track along the R-761. Works are being progressed by the NTA deliverables team and I am told works are substantially completed here.

- **Safe Routes to School for St. Kevin's National School, Greystones (Greystones MD).** This project includes infrastructure for schools to increase walking and cycling as the preferred travel mode where possible and improve safety at front of schools. These works are to date substan-

tially completed. The County Council is currently waiting on ESB power disconnection to install signage while high friction surfacing has already been completed.

- **Safe Routes to Schools: St. Johns Senior National School, Arklow (Arklow MD).** This project will ultimately provide infrastructure for schools to increase walking and cycling as the preferred travel mode where possible and improve safety at front of schools. These works are also, to date, substantially completed. High Friction Surfacing will be completed once weather permits.

- **Safe Routes to Schools: SS Michael and Peter Junior School (Arklow MD).** This project seeks to improve road safety and make the areas adjacent to the schools safer, so that children can be encouraged and facilitated to walk and cycle to the schools safely. Current works on this project are substantially completed and High Friction Surfacing will be completed once weather permits.

- **Lastly the Arklow South Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme (Arklow MD).** This project includes the provision of 2.8km of segregated cycle track along the R-772 Wexford Road, Arklow between Knockmore Roundabout and M11 Junction 21. The scheme will also seek to construct 1.4km approx. of pedestrian footpath. Works continue

to progress, with drainage and utility works on northbound carriage to be completed.. This project should be completed by Q2 2024.

Minister Harris con-

cluded: "These are all very important projects which are set to make a significant difference to people in Wicklow who chose to travel in a much more sustainable manner

and are seeking also to improve physical and mental health wellbeing.

"I am delighted that so many projects are being actively pursued by Wicklow County

Council, these projects significantly improve local life, connect suburbs, local villages who have lost touch because of dangerous roads overused by cars.

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Staff and service users of Sunbeam House Services at the official opening of the Sunbeam House Sensory Garden in Bray.

Wicklow-based Ukrainian's work features at major craft and design fair

The work of a Ukrainian war refugee forced to abandon her career as a tailor, featured at Ireland's largest craft and design fair earlier this month.

Mother-of-three Elena Pozdniak fled her war-torn homeland with daughter Evelyn, seven, and son Yaroslav, 17, while eldest son Ruslan, 21, and husband Viacheslav, remained to fight for their country. Eighteen months on,

Elena has found work with Dublin-based social enterprise We Make Good, which helps vulnerable people find employment by training them in traditional skills such as sewing, knitting and metalwork.

Now living in Bray, Elena works full-time as a machinist - and her and her colleagues' work appeared at craft and design fair Gifted, which opened at the RDS on Wednesday, 6th December.

"I saw the advert online and said to myself that I had the skills they were looking for and could make the things they were making," said Elena, who previously worked as a tailor in Nicolaev, in southern Ukraine.

Fellow Ukrainian Tanya Kazatkova also works as a machinist at the award-winning enterprise, which makes t-shirts, baby wear, tea towels, kitchenware and beauty products.

She left her home city of Dnipro to escape the fighting 19 months ago with her daughter Maria, 15, and the pair now live in temporary accommodation in the capital.

"I studied fashion design for four years in Ukraine and it is something I would love to do in Ireland, but I need to improve my English first," she said.

Since it was established 10 years ago, We Make Good has employed 26 people from marginalised backgrounds, including ex-prisoners.



Tanya Kazatkova and Elena Pozdniak

"Anyone who comes to work for us is paid a living wage while they train," CEO Caroline Gardner said. "All our employees have either moved to full-time employment or education. Over the past decade, more than 150 families across Ireland have had their lives radically improved by We Make Good."

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Significant Information I hereby give notice of the submission of significant further information to the Wicklow County Council in relation to planning application ref no: 23/768 for Darragh Flynn who are applying for permission at Darraghville Agricultural Lands (North Field), Kilcoole.

Significant Further Information has been furnished to the planning authority in respect of this proposed development, and are available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council during its public opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the further information or revised plans may be made in writing to the planning authority within the period of two weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the revised newspaper and site notices. A submission or observation must be accompanied by the prescribed fee, except in the case of a person or body who has already made a submission or observation. The planning application may also be viewed online at www.wicklow.ie, under planning online enquiries.

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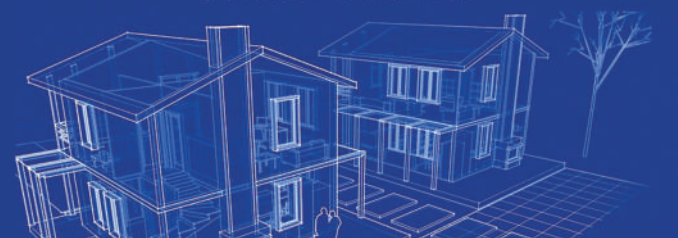
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Local Enterprise Course helping to encourage local business



Minister Simon Harris

Wicklow's Local Enterprise Office will be running a course named the 'Start Your Own Business' programme in January, to help promote local business and encourage people looking to take the initiative in their local community.

Speaking on this, Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris said, "I am glad to see that Wicklow's Local Enterprise Office will be starting a new 'Start Your Own Business' programme next January."

"This is a fantastic initiative, that will be a great help to those looking to get involved and look at creating their own business. Our communities, towns and villages, thrive off of local businesses, and the impact they have on our homes cannot be overstated. Supporting local business and local entrepreneurs is one of Fine Gael's top priorities, and I hope to see a number of the programme's students go on to set up their own successful enterprises."

Bray CIC welcomes new volunteers to its service

The Bray Citizen Information Centre (CIC) was recently thrilled to welcome a new cohort of volunteers who will enhance and extend their services to more clients in 2024

"We are happy to welcome Anne, Triona, Susan and Helena who have recently completed their first part of the Information Providers mandatory training and will be ready to serve as volunteer Information Providers starting the second trimester of 2024," CIC stated. "It is inspiring to see people of all ages who are excited to put in their own voluntary contribution to a more inclusive, egalitarian society."

Triona, from Bray, shared: "I always had it in my head that, when I would retire, volunteering with Bray CIC is something that I would like to do, to be able to give back to the community and also learn more myself. I think it's really important for all of us to help everybody, no matter where you're from. We're all from somewhere different, but we all have something to contribute."

The training certificates were awarded during a warm-hearted ceremony where the staff threw in a bit of festive cheer to congratulate and wholeheartedly welcome the new volunteers. Over a potluck lunch, staff and volunteers gathered around, shared

appetizers and home-made dishes and chatted over a cup of tea, cakes and mince pies.

Volunteers come from a diverse array of previous roles, mostly client facing ones, and several have shared that, just like Triona, they had envisioned taking up volunteering at some point in their lives. People need support in filling in different forms so that their particular situation is detailed as thoroughly as possible, and that is where the volunteer Information Assistants step in. But, as they will progress in their learning, they will be able to assist clients with much more complex queries.

Anne notes that: "I'm happy. There's a really good atmosphere here. There's lots of support, for example, there's a peer support line so that, when you can't access some information you can ring through to somebody who has expertise to deal with complex queries."

Funded by the Citizens Information Board, the range of areas covered by the CIS are wide including social welfare rights and entitlements and other social issues such as employment, health ser-

vices, housing, education, family matters and consumer rights on which people need access to information. To find out opening hours or if you would like the CIC to address a specific query or to book an appointment with a member of the team please contact your local Citizens Information Centre. There are offices in Arklow and Bray where customers can drop-in, telephone or make an appointment. Telephone: Arklow - 0818 07 6750 and Bray - 0818 07 6780. For anyone needing impartial, confidential, non-judgemental and informed advice and support the CIS is here to help, for free. There are many ways to access our services.



Martina Cronin (Development Manager), Miriam Johnston, Anne Mooney, Triona Irving, Julie Stringer, Kay Mullaly, Olive Lynch, Miria Durmin, and Raluca Turcanasu (volunteer coordinator) pictured at the Bray CIC New Volunteers Certificates Awards ceremony.



Caroline Crawford and Rachel Cunningham at the launch of Garden County Whiskey, and the Garden County distillery in Rathnew. Established by father and son distilling duo Micxhael and Gavin Clifford, Garden County Distillery is at the forefront of Ireland's revolution of independent and craft spiritry distilling.

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