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GREYSTONES GARDA STATION  
Page 9



YOUNG SCIENTISTS  
Page 12



WICKLOW HERITAGE  
Page 15

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Tuesday 23rd January 2024 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray, A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

# 'WE NEED A SOLUTION'

The new year has started without clarity for students and parents in many areas in North Wicklow regarding the chronic shortage of secondary school places. Last week saw Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore and Green Party TD Steven Matthews raise the issue in The Dail.

It's an issue which Deputy Whitmore has been raising consistently with the Minister for Education and her officials since October 2023, as many students in Greystones are still on waiting lists for a secondary school place. Deputy Whitmore repeated her call for a meeting with between the Minister for Education and the local Wicklow TDs with an update on the solutions to this avoidable

problem. Speaking in The Dail last Wednesday, Deputy Whitmore said "As we return to the Dail today, I am again looking for immediate action on the shortage of school places for students in Greystones. There is a significant shortage of places for student applying to all three secondary schools in Greystones. "I asked the Department of Education, at the Education Comm-

ittee in October, how they intended to address this shortfall and was told that information would be forthcoming. Since then I have raised this with the Minister in writing, in oral question time, as a topical issue in the Dail chamber and have repeatedly been rebuffed with promises that a solution was coming. It is now half way through January 2024 and I am still being contacted by tens of parents each day



Principal Ray Tedders, Deputy Principal Louise Fortune, Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD, and Deputy Principal Gabriel Allen at the Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) Open Day last Friday. It was announced last week that a €1.5 million investment for BIFE will see the building of a brand new and state of the art modular accommodation. See page 7. Pic: Michael Kelly.



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looking for an update for their child who is on a waiting list.

"In December, I attended a meeting between the Department of Education and local TDs on this matter. At that time, the Department indicated that they were going to use the month to analyse the data provided to them by schools in Greystones and to come up with a firm solution to this problem. We now need to hear what that solution is and when it will be rolled out."

Speaking to the impact this is having for families in the area, Deputy Whitmore said: "This has caused such immense stress for so many parents and children in Greystones and the surrounding areas. The initial upset of not getting placed in any of the three sec-

ondary schools, has been compounded by the fact that many are finding themselves 30, 40, 50 places down the waiting list. This has become even more time sensitive than it was before Christmas because the process of entrance exams is due to start in February. Students in 6th class are now hearing from their classmates about the exams they are taking soon and are more fearful that they will not have a place, or fall behind their contemporaries.

"We need solutions, and we need them now. This entire fiasco could have been avoided if the Department had listened to the principals in the area, or to my calls on this last year, and ensured that the various school building projects in the area were delivered on time. Families have been left waiting

long enough for solutions to this, and they cannot be asked to wait

any longer," concluded Deputy Whitmore.

also raised the issue in a Topical Issue debate Deputy Matthews

Continued on page 3

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# Wicklow UN Vets get tour of Leinster House



Minister Simon Harris with Wicklow UN Veterans Association members in Leinster House

Minister Simon Harris recently invited the Wicklow Branch of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association, Post 21, for a tour of the Houses of the Oireachtas, the Dail and the Seanad.

During the tour, members of the UN Veterans Association learned about the history of the Houses of the Oireachtas and got to share their own experiences as peacekeepers during UN missions overseas.

Minister Harris said: "It's an honour to have the Wicklow Branch of the United Nations Veterans Association in for a tour of the Dail and Seanad. The Wicklow Branch of the United Nations Veterans Association, Post 21, are a tremendous group of people who have done a great service to this country and the world in their peace keeping missions.

"This Association and its members continue to deliver a great service to the community in Wicklow by organising a huge number of community led events bringing people together and raising funds for various charities.

"I am in constant awe of those involved in our Defence Forces and those involved in UN peace keeping missions overseas - they will always have my support. I want to thank the members that came in today and also thank them for gifting me with the medal they presented me with during the tour.

"I look forward to welcoming them again in the near future and working with them in Wicklow to deliver stronger and more vibrant communities."

## Sea buckthorn removal at Brittas Bay

Wicklow County Council is inviting interested individuals to register for a volunteer work event taking place in Brittas Bay on Saturday, 27th January, 10am to 1pm.

The event will involve the cutting pack and removal of Sea Buckthorn (an invasive species) from the dune system as part of the Council's ongoing conservation programme to enhance dune biodiversity and stability.

The work will focus on controlling the spread of young growth and most of the cutting will be undertaken using loppers. Equipment, gloves and full instruction will be provided on the day.

Sea Buckthorn is a thorny shrub and work will be on uneven ground therefore old work clothes and sturdy footwear are recommended.

Anybody interested in participating is asked to register by email to [wicklowheritage@wicklowco-co.ie](mailto:wicklowheritage@wicklowco-co.ie). The meeting point is South Beach Car Park, Brittas Bay, at 10am on Saturday 27th January.

## Delgany Thursday Club

The next outing of Delgany Thursday Club is to Dublinia Viking Museum, Dublin 8 on Thursday, 1st February, 2024. Leaving Christ Church, Delgany, at 1.30 pm sharp. E30 per person to include coach transport & self-guided tour. Refreshments at own expense.

Due to the increased cost of coach transport, we need a minimum of 20 participants for outings to proceed. If the number of 20 is not reached, those who have pre-booked will be notified. To book contact Peter on 086 830 7644, Violet on 087 756 0153 or John on 086 356 6527.

## Holy Rosary Soup And Sandwiches

The next lunch is on Wednesday, 31st January in Kilian House Family Centre from 12.15 to 2pm. Everyone is welcome to come along to enjoy good home-made food and a friendly chat. Suggested donation 7 Euro. All proceeds are given to local charities.

## Wicklow & District Lions Club Quiz Nights 2024

**Jan 25** - Doyle's Lounge Rathnew - St.Coen's And Wicklow First Responders

**Feb 1** - Ernie's Lounge Wicklow - DCW And Wicklow Choral Society

**Feb 8** - The Brass Fox Wicklow - CCM And Wicklow Scouts

**Feb 15** - Bridge Tavern Wicklow - Parkinsons And Wicklow Town Team

**Feb 22** - Chesters Ashford - Ashford Ns And Wicklow ICA

**Feb 29** - O'shea's Lounge Wicklow - Wicklow Cancer Support, Leinster Fleadh And Holy Rosary School

**March 7** - Wicklow Golf Club, Quiz Grand Final

## Roundwood Variety Group

Roundwood Variety Group presents Aladdin the panto, an original script by Thomas O'Leary. "Join our hero Aladdin and his best friend Bish Bosh who along with his Mammy the Widow Twankey and little sister's Wishy and Washy are out on a new and exciting Arabian adventure to get rich quick and win the hand of the beautiful Princess Jasmine. But Aladdin has to watch out as the evil Abanazar wants to get his hands on 'The Mystical Lamp of Salsabar' and control Omar the magical all powerful Genie inside. Fun and frolics are guaranteed in this exciting new take on a very popular Panto classic! Any queries or refunds will be done through eventbrite. Shows are on from Fri 2nd to Sun 4th of February. See [www.eventbrite.ie](http://www.eventbrite.ie)."

## Greystones-Delgany-Kilcoole Local Area Plan

The local area plan is the main public statement of planning policies for the local community. It sets out the objectives of the planning authority for the development of land. The plan includes objectives for land use. This includes zoning, infrastructure, community facilities, design and environmental/heritage protection. The plan consists of a written statement and a series of maps, including the land use zoning map for the area. Full details can be found at [greystones-delgany-kilcoole-lap-wicklow.hub.arcgis.com](http://greystones-delgany-kilcoole-lap-wicklow.hub.arcgis.com). Making a submission to the Local Area Plan is encouraged. Closing date for submissions is 31 January 2024.

# Join the Purple House Cycle Challenge in 2024

Purple House Cancer Support is calling on cyclists of all abilities to join them on their annual cycle challenge, which takes place over 5 days across Croatia, Slovenia and Italy from the 18th-24th June 2024.

Following on from the success of their Coast2Coast cycle across France in 2023, the challenge will take cyclists on a route that a rich history in the region and many different types of landscape to be explored, from Coastal riding to Alpine valleys to rich farmland and of course vineyards.

The challenge is being led by Irish Cycling Safaris, which means that the cyclists will be guided on the route each day, with first aid and mechanical support also provided.

Participants are asked to pay their own costs for the

trip, which will ensure that all funds raised will provide vital cancer services to families living with cancer.

In 2023, Purple House supported families from Wicklow, Dublin, Kildare, Wexford, Meath, Louth and Tipperary through counselling, art and play therapy, survivorship programmes, cancer rehabilitation physiotherapy, nutrition counselling, bereavement counselling and practical support services.

For more information or to book a place, please visit <https://www.purplehouse.ie/2024-purple-house-cycle/> or contact Purple House on 01-2866966



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# 'WE NEED A SOLUTION'

Continued from page 1

in The Dail last Thursday evening: "Since I was elected I have been engaging with parents in north Wicklow, especially in Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole and Newtownmountkennedy," said Deputy Matthews. "These are areas that have undergone quite a large population increase. A lot of the new housing we are seeing is being built in the north Wicklow area and it is good to see housing being built [...] However, my concern is we are not keeping pace with the provision of the services that go with housing.

"We have a number of schools in Greystones. One of those schools is Temple Carrig. It has a capacity of about 750 but at the moment it is operating at in or around 900, so it is well over capacity. The school is somewhere through the process of getting the nod from the Department to apply for planning permission for an extension.

"For the past three to four years, we have gone through the process of being short of school places. It has been a real pressure on parents and children who hope to go to those schools, in addition to siblings, teachers and everybody involved.



Jennifer Whitmore TD

We have this scramble every year.

"Greystones Community College is another school in Greystones. There is planning permission for a 1,000-unit school, which is fantastic, but I suspect that is delayed somewhat and that we will experience a shortage of school places again. I know we will experience it this year, but we will have it next year and the year after. I think that school is supposed to be delivered in quarter 2 of 2025. We are now in quarter 1 of 2024. With the best will in the world, and all the shovels in the world, that school will not be up and running by quarter 2 of 2025. I suspect we are looking at later so we will have this school

pressure again.

"St. David's has undergone a full refurbishment but it is already at capacity. This affects the whole hinterland of Greystones town and the areas that make up the Greystones municipal district. A little further down the road, Coláiste Chraobh Abhann in Kilcoole has also got a planning permission somewhere in the process but we do not know when that will go out to tender. The problem is each school is putting pressure on the others because in areas such as Newtownmountkennedy and Roundwood, which is even further out in County Wicklow, pressure is being put on Kilcoole and Kilcoole puts pressure on the three schools in Greystones. Temple Carrig needs its planning permission and Greystones Community College needs that permanent new-build 1,000 pupil school.

"We need to prioritise the assessment of the Greystones Community College tender, and get that contract awarded and that school built as quickly as possible. The Department needs to respond to Temple Carrig, which is leading on this project, to give it the go-ahead to apply for



Steven Matthews TD

planning permission for that badly needed extension."

The Minister for Education was not present for the debate, so Deputy Matthews' questions were fielded by Fine Gael Kildare South TD Martin Heydon.

Deputy Heydon stated "Since 2018, and up to the end of October 2023, a total of €145 million has been invested in school infrastructure in County Wicklow. This significant capital investment includes a recently delivered major building project to expand St. David's secondary school in Greystones. State-of-the-art, modern school accommodation for 750 pupils was provided at this school. The Department of Education is currently progressing a major building project

for Temple Carrig School in Greystones under the national development plan.

"A project is under way at Temple Carrig to provide accommodation for 1,000 pupils, which is currently at stage 1, preliminary design stage. A project for four modular mainstream classrooms has also been approved. These classrooms are now on-site and the project is completed.

"In line with the Department's demographic projections of post-primary school place requirements, there has been a continued growth in enrolments throughout many school planning areas in County Wicklow. In response, the Department is providing further significant additional post-primary capacity, including a new 1,000-pupil school for Greystones Community College. Greystones Community College was established in 2020 as a regional solution for the Kilcoole and Greystones area."

Deputy Heydon explained that this project is at Tender Stage. The invitation to tender was issued in April 2023 and the process takes about 8-12 months. Tender returns have been received and are currently being evaluat-

ed. Once a contractor has been appointed, it is anticipated that construction will commence shortly thereafter.

He continued, "In addition to the above projects, there is also the existing school in the adjacent Kilcoole school planning area, Coláiste Chraobh Abhann, for which a major project has been approved to expand the

school to 1,000 pupils. This project is currently at stage 2b and is being delivered by the National Development Finance Agency [...] In the context of post-primary enrolment pressures at Greystones, the Department is aware of pressures for school places for the 2024-25 school year. A critical next step for the Department of Education is to establish the actual number of additional first-year places required for 2024 in order for an appropriate solution to be put in place.

"In that context, schools in a number of areas of enrolment pressure, including Greystones, have been requested to share data on applications for admissions. This data has been received by Department officials and is currently being analysed with a view to establishing the actual requirement for places. Preliminary assessments indicate that duplication of applications and applications from outside the local area are very much contributing to enrolment pressures in the town."

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# 'Permanent solution needed for school children accessing the 885 bus'

Jennifer Whitmore TD has called for a permanent solution for children who have no way home from school following the introduction of the new 885 bus timetable in November. Local Link last week confirmed that the temporary 4pm 885 bus service between Sallins and Ballymore Eustace will be extended until Friday, January 26th, while a further review of the service takes place.

Deputy Whitmore, along with Local Area Rep. Deirdre McCormack, had previously raised concerns following the removal of the 4 pm 885 bus service from Sallins, which several Blessington school children had been travelling on daily to get home from their school in Naas. The timetable was altered as part of the extension of the 885 Local Link route, which started operating in November last year and saw no service leaving Sallins between 1 pm and 6 pm. Deputy Whitmore said: "This issue has been ongoing since November when I first contacted the National Transport Authority about the new 885 timetable and the impact the removal of the 4 pm service from Sallins was having on local school children. Following that representation, the NTA introduced a temporary 4 pm 885 bus service between Sallins and Ballymore Eustace via Naas and Blessington. This service ran until the end of the school term and was scheduled to continue temporarily from January 8th to 12th to coincide with the return of schools after the winter break. "However, I understood that this temporary measure would give the NTA time to devise a permanent solution, which we hoped would be in place for the children returning to school on January 8th. "Instead, we are now seeing this temporary service being extended by one week and two weeks at a time instead of introducing a permanent solution. I have reiterated my call for the NTA and Local Link to introduce a permanent solution to the gap in the 885 timetable as a matter of urgency. Students should be able to feel confident that they will have a way to get home from school each day," concluded Deputy Whitmore. Local Area Representative for West Wicklow, Deirdre McCormack, added "I welcome the fact that the NTA and Local Link have been working with us and with the affected families, but there has now been over two months to find a permanent solution to this issue. Parents need to know they can rely on this bus service to be there for their children to get home from school. "The uncertainty regarding the service has caused huge stress and disruption for the families involved, some of whom have children in exam years. "The expansion of our public transport routes here in West Wicklow is very welcome progress, but these public transport options must consider and address the needs of our communities here," added Ms McCormack.



Social Democrats Local Area Representative for West Wicklow, Deirdre McCormack, with Jennifer Whitmore TD

get home from school. "The uncertainty regarding the service has caused huge stress and disruption for the families involved, some of whom have children in exam years. "The expansion of our public transport routes here in West Wicklow is very welcome progress, but these public transport options must consider and address the needs of our communities here," added Ms McCormack.

## Bus shelter programme stops short in Bray

Just one new bus shelter has been provided in Bray over the past two years.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has provided a County-wide breakdown of the costs and locations of Bus Shelter installations over the past two years to Social Democrats 2024 Local Elections candidate, Aaron McAllorum.

The NTA fund Local Authorities for the provision and enhancement of bus stops in the administrative areas. Wicklow County Council was not funded in 2022 however received almost €365k in 2023 for 15 shelters across Wicklow in 2023.

Commenting on the information Mr McAllorum said:

"Where appropriate, stops should have some protection from the elements. I accept in the context of accessibility, street clutter or

restricted spaces, it is not always possible.

"Public transport use has to be an attractive alternative to the use of private vehicles and providing some sort of outside comfort while waiting for the bus is important given the weather conditions that often prevail in this country.

"I hope to continue to see further enhancements in 2024 in Bray and across Wicklow, the NTA are due to announce funding amounts by the end of January and I look forward to that."

Separately the NTA have confirmed to Mr. McAllorum that it is not possible to install a shelter at the well-used 4132 stop located on Bray Main Street at the Gala shop citing a series of issues.

## 'Department of Transport must play active role in maintaining travel infrastructure'



Aaron McAllorum

The Department of Transport currently does not support the National Transport Authority to provide local authorities with funds to maintain their Active Travel infrastructure, it has been highlighted.

Bray East Local Elections candidate for the Social Democrats, Aaron McAllorum is calling on Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan to provide Exchequer funding in 2024 for the purpose of establishing a fund to maintain and fix footpaths, cycle-ways and bus corridors which are delivered under the Active Travel Scheme.

Mr McAllorum said: "It is nonsensical to develop Active Travel infrastructure, like cycle facilities and footpaths, but not to have a budget available to the NTA for maintenance funding. "There is always a risk of the premature erosion of infrastructure, or simply keeping it in a stable, safe and usable state. The Minister should be all too aware

of this given what his Party are supposed to represent.

"Currently retaining unspent funds for maintenance is not possible as allocations must be spent within the same year.

"Wicklow County Council was allocated €8.4m in 2023 for Active Travel projects but had only made claim to €2.1m by the end of October, having surrendered over €3m back to the NTA in 2021 and 2022"

"Consideration has to be given to developing a way that is in line with the Public Spending Code to retain at least some of the unspent money."

2024 allocations are set to be announced towards the end of January.

## 'Government needs to commit to permanent fare reductions'

Sinn Fein John Brady has called on the Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan, to make the newest fare changes permanent to encourage the use of public transport. His comments come as the Young Adult Card was extended to 25-year-olds.

Deputy Brady said: "The reality for the vast majority of young people from Wicklow who are working or studying in Dublin is that they cannot afford to leave home to pay the exorbitant rents being demanded at the moment, resulting in often long commutes from throughout the county. Any fare reduction or encouragement to utilise public transport should have been extended to 25-year-olds from the off.

"Minister Eamon Ryan has introduced some much-wanted fare reductions, but these reductions have only been introduced as a temporary measure in the last two years. As the cost of living continues to affect workers and families across the state, we need to give them a reliable fare reduction that they know will always be available.

"I am calling on the Minister to make all the current fare reductions permanent once and for all. Workers, families, and commuters deserve some certainty around their use of public transport.

"As part of the Sinn Fein Alternative Budget for 2024, we pledged €124.1m to make the 20% wider fare reduction permanent, as well as the extension to the Young Adult Card which allows for a 50% reduction. Workers, families, students, and commuters have made the change to public transport - whether that is due to cost, climate consciousness or convenience. A Sinn Fein government would ensure they can rely on the current fare reduction for years to come."



John Brady TD

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“It allowed her to sit in the living room watching her favourite detective programmes without being disturbed. She had her meals prepared for her and the carer enabled her to live her life to the full as she always did before.

Úna was able to find the right carer for her mom through Affordable Live-in Homecare, who specialise in providing live-in care. ALHomecare has already helped countless families across Ireland

find experienced carers who fit the exact needs specified by the family.

“Some responsibility was lifted off our shoulders, knowing that there was someone responsible, professional and caring in the house whose ultimate job was to make sure that mom was ok. That brought huge peace of mind,” Úna says.

When asked about what advice she would have for others, Úna explains how finding a carer with ALHomecare has benefited everyone involved, from her mom and the family to the carer herself.

“I would say definitely look at this

option with ALHomecare. It’s a win-win; the carer themselves get a contract of employment which gives both the carer and the family a sense of security.

“I would urge anybody to think about it, certainly if they have a spare bedroom and if your loved one needs more and more care as they get older. I think it is without a doubt the optimal solution, it gives you consistency of care, it’s much more affordable, you can get

tax back from the Revenue Commission and it’s better than having a lot of different visiting carers coming constantly.” Úna adds.

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Una Kinane



Rosie Newton with Ciara and Lloyd Hutchinson at the recent Parkrun in Avondale Forest Park, Rathdrum.

# 'Sheep may not safely graze if e-collar ban introduced'

*"Minister may want to look 'cuddly' but a ban on dog training devices would be scientifically illiterate," says Senator*

Independent Senator Ronan Mullen has criticised the Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue, for "trying to hide" from farmers and dog owners a proposal to ban electronic training collars for dogs. He also challenged his Seanad colleague, Senator Regina Doherty, over her claims about data supporting a ban.

A proposal for an ultra-fast three-week consultation on the possible ban of electronic collars, which are used to train dogs not to go near livestock, was this month put at the bottom of the Department of Agriculture's website - without any heading, and with no briefing note for stakeholders or members of the public. The deadline for submissions is Friday, 26th January, three weeks after the notice of the consultation was put on the website.

Senator Mullen said, "it is a long-standing tradition of Governments to hide unpopular announcements in the hope that nobody will notice. But it is completely unacceptable for the Government to stage a fig-leaf of a consultation and to bury the announcement of it on its website - beneath a series of guidance notes on dog ear-cropping. The Department has given no

indication of why it's putting the question of a ban on the agenda, nor has it given any guidance on what information is being requested.

"The reason for the subterfuge seems to be that attempts for a similar ban in England recently failed because of a backlash from farmers and dog owners. It is farmers who have to face the gruesome consequences when sheep have been savaged and dog-owners who must deal with their pets being shot or put down," says Senator Mullen.

"E-collar training is used by thousands of dog owners to make their dogs wary of approaching sheep when they escape," says Senator Mullen. "There is an impressive amount of science demonstrating the effectiveness of e-collar training. The alternative of training dogs through rewarding them with biscuits, so called 'positive only' training,

is not proven to be effective at stopping predatory attacks on livestock. It is scientifically illiterate to suggest otherwise."

Other approaches, like increasing criminal sanctions to get owners to constantly keep dogs on leads do not solve the problem either, says Senator Mullen.

"That is because owners know that their pets need off-lead exercise. And dogs don't pay fines. They smell a sheep long before their owner notices and they can run much faster.

"There is a lot of evidence to show that e-collar training is not cruel. And so I am surprised that my Seanad colleague, Regina Doherty claims that the dog e-collars 'are incredibly cruel' because they 'create 6,000 volts'. Yet 200,000 volts is safely used in classroom experiments in which children's hair is raised. The missing science behind Senator Doherty's con-

cern is that of current. Extremely high voltages can be safe when the current is low. This is why the impact of electric devices used to safeguard animals is measured in joules of electricity - which is the combination of voltage and current. The product standard for dog e-collars limits them to delivering a pulse of 5 mJ - that is 3,000 times lower than the 15,000 mJ produced by some livestock fences which any animal can accidentally touch."

Senator Mullen, who will be raising the matter in the Seanad, called for the consultation deadline to be extended. "Otherwise, it will look as though the Government is trying to hide the consultation because it is only interested in hearing from certain vested interests before reaching a conclusion.

"There may be a temptation for the Minister to take the



Senator Mullen

'cuddly' stance of wanting to ban a device which some campaigners portray as cruel. But the Government needs to take an evidence-based approach to the issues of whether these e-collars are effective and whether their use compromises the safety and welfare of animals.

"The Government can't do its job properly here unless it consults widely with scientists, sheep farmers and their representatives, dog owners, vets and others with an evidence-based point of view.

"Ireland has a huge problem of dogs attacking sheep. To take away the only proven training method of avoiding these attacks should not be done lightly."

# Couple admits responsibility in having dogs' ears cut off

A Co. Wicklow couple have been banned for life from owning American Bully dogs, fined a total of €3,000, and ordered to pay total costs of €3,486.55 after admitting their parts in having their pets' ears cut off.

Ms. Susan Douglas of Hazelbrook Rise, Merrymeeting, Rathnew, pleaded guilty to two offences under sections 11 and 12 of the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 (AHWA) and Mr. Michael Lambert, of the same address, pleaded guilty to two offences under section 12 and one under section 16.

The two American Bully pups involved were discovered by ISPCA Chief Inspector Conor Dowling at the defendants' house on 15th December 2021, when he responded to a report from a member of the public. Mr. Dowling told the court that it was apparent that the ears of the pups had been removed, leaving raw wounds that had been stitched with some form of twine, not medical thread. There was also a French Bulldog in the house for which there was no concern.

Mr. Dowling described how Mr. Lambert initially said that he had bought the pups with their ears cropped approximately a week before. But in a subsequent interview with Ms. Douglas, Chief Inspector Dowling was told that they had the pups for three or four weeks and Mr. Lambert had organised the cropping of the pups' ears without Ms. Douglas' knowledge. The pups were initially seized and



One of the American Bully pups with its cropped ears

later surrendered. Both have been responsibly rehomed.

Chief Inspector Dowling told the court that ear cropping is performed entirely for cosmetic reasons to achieve a desired look and does not benefit the dogs in any way. Describing the offence as 'serious', Judge David Kennedy commented that it was done 'to make dogs look this way, an unnatural way'.

Ms. Douglas was fined €500 with six months to pay, and Mr. Lambert was fined a total of €2,500 with 12 months to pay. They were also ordered to jointly pay €1,026.55 ISPCA costs and €2,460 in prosecution costs. In addition, Judge Kennedy issued both parties

with a lifetime disqualification order from owning American Bully dogs.

"Ear cropping is a barbaric mutilation," commented Chief Inspector Dowling. "The dogs on which it is inflicted are caused an incredible amount of pain during the procedure and its immediate aftermath. But they can experience life-long pain as a result, of having their ears cut off and it also affects their ability to communicate throughout their lives. It has become more prevalent in recent years with the rise in popularity of American Bullies, so much so that new legislation was introduced last autumn to put a stop to ear cropping in Ireland for good."

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# €1.5m state of the art modular unit for BIFE

**Fine Gael TD and Minister for Further and Higher Education Simon Harris has confirmed that Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) has been green lit with a €1.5 million investment for a brand new c1250m2 modular facilities that will replace the existing temporary accommodation.**

Speaking on Friday Minister Harris said: "This is fantastic news and a much needed investment in our college in Bray. I have been working closely with BIFE and with my Department to get this project and investment over the line so I am delighted to be able to announce this €1.5 million investment today.

"The new modular unit will be truly transformative and will be of huge benefit to thousands of young people in Wicklow looking to study close to home. Back in October, as Minister for Further and Higher Education I received an application to replace the old temporary facilities in BIFE with newer and more fit for purpose ones.

"I have been steadfast in my actions as Minister and local TD in

making sure this application be progressed as quickly as possible and I am delighted to say this is getting progressed at pace.

"I am unwavering and determined to make sure the people of Wicklow are provided with high quality third level education opportunities in modern and fit for purpose facilities. BIFE plays and will continue to play a huge part in provide the people of Wicklow and the East Coast with opportunities for young people to complete third level degrees.

"I look forward to seeing this project built in the coming months and will continue to follow this closely by engaging with BIFE and my agencies. This is an important investment in Bray and helps to

develop a modern Further Education training college.

"I look forward to working closely with BIFE as we develop the proposal to develop a Wicklow College of the Future, a significant upgrade of the BIFE campus, which will allow for a major expansion of apprenticeship courses."

The College of the Future Major Projects Fund will support the implementation of the vision set out in the Further Education Strategy. This Fund, and the proposed for development in County Wicklow has the potential to deliver on a range of strategic objectives.

Minister Harris concluded "Delivering educational opportunities in Wicklow will always be a top priority of mine."



Ella Dease and Siobhan Daly at the BIFE Open Day last Friday

# New site purchased for permanent location of St. Catherine's School

**The Department of Education has purchased a new 5.2 acre site at Old Convent, Kilcoole. The site will act as a permanent location for the school.**

Minister Harris said: "This is fantastic news and a testament to the years of work. St Catherine's school has a special place in the hearts of the people of Wicklow. It has transformed the lives of so many young people with additional needs.

"I am a long standing supporter and friend of the school and I am so pleased it will have a permanent home with modern, fit for purpose facilities."

Minister Harris committed to continuing to work with the school and the Department of Education to deliver a new school on the new site.

Cllr Stephen Stokes, Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District, also warmly welcomed the news. Cllr Stokes stated: "This is a positive development for the school and the area. I would like to congratulate all of the school staff for

their hard work and continued dedication."

The expected new development is expected to cater for 25 classes, over 2 floors. In addition there will be a number of purpose built facilities including play areas. Cllr Stephen Stokes also wants to see infrastructure improvements for Kilcoole.

Cllr Stokes added: "From a practical point of view there will be cars and transport vehicles coming to and from St. Catherine's. Kilcoole needs decisive investment in roads and footpaths. The construction of this new school facility will underscore the importance of improvements. I will continue to campaign for road and pedestrian safety enhancements across Kilcoole, Charlesland, Delgany, Greystones, Killadreenan and Newcastle."

# New special needs education school to service South Wicklow

**Deputy Jennifer Whitmore, Social Democrats TD for Wicklow, has welcomed confirmation from the government that a new special education school has been announced for Gorey, Co. Wexford. It is intended that this school will meet demand for special education from South Wicklow also.**

Deputy Whitmore said: "This is excellent news for families in South Wicklow. I had raised the need for an additional special school for south Wicklow / north Wexford with the Department in October, and I'm delighted to see that the proposal has been finalised. A new school in Gorey will

be able to accommodate students from south of the county, many of whom are travelling long distances up to Bray to access education.

"On a recent visit to Newcourt special school in Bray, I spoke to one student who spends an hour and half getting to school everyday. This is

clearly not acceptable and its great that an alternative will now be available to students from south of the county.

Whitmore went on to say: "While the establishment of the school itself was announced with a plan to operate from the 2024/2025 school year, details of the

enrolment and exact location are still to come. I want to see the details of these proposals, and I will communicate directly with the

Minister for Education on this issue in the coming weeks to ensure that families in South Wicklow are fully accommodated. There are many families who have children with complex learning needs who will benefit significantly from access to this school."



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

## LOCAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME 2024

The Local Enhancement Programme for 2024 was announced by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphries T.D. and Minister of State with Responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien T.D. on the 6th of December 2023. This scheme has a total budget of €6m, with €176,338.11 being allocated to Wicklow County Council.

This funding will provide capital supports essential for the many small community groups and organisations, particularly those who serve disadvantaged areas in rural and urban areas. There will be a particular focus on small capital works/improvements, and the purchase of equipment for community use.

Minister Humphries noted that €1m of the fund has been reserved for Women's groups in recognition of the fact that there is a growing number of Women's Sheds, Groups and Networks across the country.

<b>Wicklow County Council LEP Allocation:</b>	<b>€146,948.43</b>
<b>Wicklow County Council Women's Group Allocation:</b>	<b>€29,389.69</b>
<b>Wicklow County Council Total Allocation:</b>	<b>€176,338.11</b>

Wicklow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is responsible for allocating funding for this scheme. Applications should relate to one or more key priority areas identified in their LCDC's Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) in order to be eligible for consideration.

### How to Apply

Applications for funding can now be made under this Programme to County Wicklow LCDC by 4.00 p.m. on Friday 8th March 2024.

Application Forms & Women's Groups Application forms and guidelines are available from Wicklow County Council's website [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie)

Community, Cultural & Social Development, Wicklow County Council, Whitegates, Wicklow Town, A67 FW96.

Phone: 0404 20208

Email: [LEP@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:LEP@wicklowcoco.ie)



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Department of Rural and  
Community Development



# Aontú select Ciarán Hogan to contest local election in Bray

Aontú Wicklow have selected Ciaran Hogan to run in the upcoming local elections in the Bray East district. Mr Hogan said he stands for Aontu's core values of life, unity and economic justice.



Ciaran Hogan (right) with Glenn O'Flaherty at an Aontu event in Wicklow Town in 2020

Announcing his candidacy, Mr Hogan, a married father of two girls, said "The most basic drive for all parents is to give to their children a better world than they themselves had. Our current government is failing us. We must have leaders who are effective and accountable to the communities they represent. I'm not in it for fame or money, I'm doing this for my girls' future."

Mr.Hogan brings a wealth of experience in the private sector as an entrepreneur and business manager. Also with a background in commercial piloting, Mr. Hogan says he is ready and passionate to contribute to the betterment of the community.

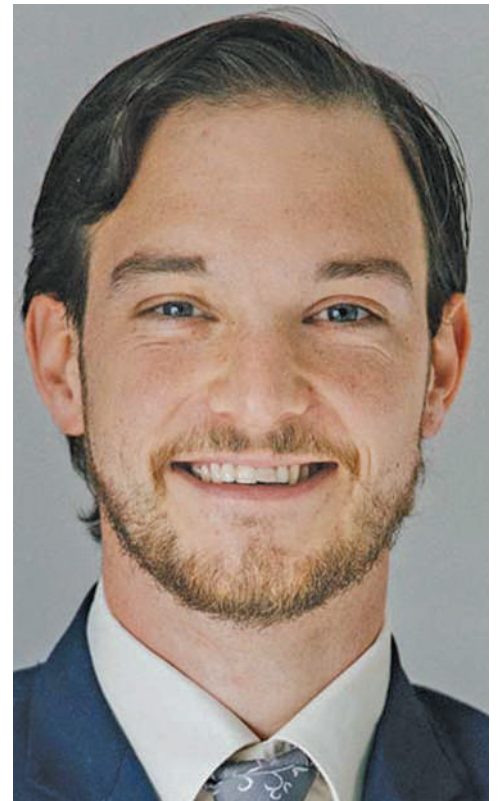
Mr. Hogan says he is committed to addressing the problem of commercial and residential vacancy in Bray. "Filling Bray with new businesses will reinvigorate the local community, economy and culture," he said.

As a community activist, he said he

understands the importance of community-driven input and oversight, and will make the goings on of the council meeting more transparent to every resident in Bray.

"Everyone can see rising discontent with the current way our town and country is going," he said. "People are lacking the services, amenities, and local pride that is the responsibility of our leaders to nurture. I'm stepping in because I can turn this around and make Bray the best town in Ireland, to live, work in, or visit."

Mr Hogan's campaign will officially be launched with a public event on Monday 19th February at the Royal Hotel in Bray, with Party Leader Peadar Toibin and Aontu South Ireland Rep Patrick Murphy expected to attend and speak. Members of the media, as well as the community, are invited to attend and learn more about Mr.Hogan's vision for Bray Municipal District.



Ciaran Hogan

## Greystones Green councillor selected for MEP substitute list

Greystones Councillor Lourda Scott has been selected as a substitute MEP candidate for the Green Party in the Ireland South Constituency.

Substitutes replace the MEP if the MEP is unable to complete their term in the European Parliament for any reason. Councillor Scott will be third on the panel, following a recent voting process among Green Party members.

Speaking after the

selection, Scott said "I am delighted to have the endorsement of my fellow Green Party members and to be added to the MEP substitute panel. This means that if Ireland South re elects an MEP that I could potentially become his or her replacement. I recently

travelled to Brussels to meet with current Ireland South MEP Grace O Sullivan. It was great to visit the European Parliament and get an insight as to how European politics works. We discussed at length how the EU can work for us on a local level here

in Wicklow, through funding schemes such as LEADER and the translation of EU legislation to practical actions on the ground. I pointed out that sometimes the work locally can point the way forward. For example through my efforts on the Climate Policy committee the use of glyphosate by the Council is now banned, a topic that is being hotly debated in Europe. We also discussed the ongoing crisis in Gaza and the response by parliamentarians."

Cllr Scott continued "It is a huge honor to be considered as a replacement for an MEP should the opportunity arise. However my priority at the moment is to continue with my Council work. I will be seeking re election in the Greystones Municipal District in June. I want to remind all residents who are over the age of 18 that they are entitled to vote in the local elections and all citizens of the European Union over the age of 18 that they are entitled to vote in the European elections. I encourage everyone to join the electoral register if they aren't already on it and to use your vote this year."



Cllr Lourda Scott (right), with Green Party MEP Grace O'Sullivan

## Doyle to contest local elections in Bray East ward

Bray Green Party councillor Erika Doyle has announced that she will run in the local elections later this year in the Bray East ward.

Cllr Doyle says she hopes the electorate will allow her to continue the work she has been doing for the people of Bray East since being Co-opted into the council seat in 2020, after the election of Steven Matthews to Dail Eireann.

Cllr Doyle said, "It has been the highest privilege to serve the people of East Bray on Bray Municipal District Council. The highest point was undoubtedly being elected as Cathaoirleach in 2022 and representing the Bray district as its first citizen for the year. Throughout my four years I have aimed to focus on the needs and desires of the people living in Bray - how can I channel those through local policy and actions to make Bray a wonderful place to live, work and visit. I have tried to demystify the work of the council and councillors and listen carefully to my constituents for direction, while following principals of integrity, transparency, equity, and being mindful of our responsibility to protect our environment.

"I will now turn to the people of Bray east and ask them to vote to allow me to continue my work. We have a healthy democracy in this country and people can choose who they want to represent them this summer, both locally and in Europe, by coming out and using their vote. I urge everybody to use their vote, regardless of their political persuasion."



Cllr Erika Doyle

## Confusion over electoral register

Independent Senator Victor Boyhan last week spoke about the importance of clear communication ahead of local elections in June 2024 following concerns that people would be taken off the electoral register if they didn't submit their PPS number.

A statement released by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage led members of the public to believe this was the case. This was incorrect and the message was reworded following a public outcry on RTE's Liveline and social media.

Senator Victor Boyhan who sits on the Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage which oversees issues related to electoral reform said the follow-

ing, "It is essential that we ensure the integrity of our elections at a local and national level by providing clear information.

"Callers to Liveline told Joe Duffy that local authorities had no legal power to seek such data from private individuals, while some voiced concern about their details being compromised by a future data breach online. The Department has since corrected the mistake, but many people may not

hear this news until later if they hear at all. Miscommunication like this wastes the time of our city and county councillors and risks undermining local authorities and confidence in the electoral process."

Senator Boyhan concluded his remarks by saying, "We need much greater clarity in future. Clear communication is essential to the health of our democracy and the conduct of our electoral process."



# Refurbishment works on Greystones Garda Station underway

Refurbishment works on Greystones Garda Station and car park resurfacing works are underway.



Minister Harris at Greystones Garda Station

Speaking last Thursday, Minister Simon Harris said: "This is great news for Greystones Garda Station as the Minister for Justice and Minister for the OPW have confirmed to me that works are due to begin soon to refurbish the station and resurface the car park.

"I have been actively engaging with both Ministers encouraging them to invest in Greystones Garda Station and this news is really positive for the men and women of An Garda Síochána in the area."

The full works in the station include:

- Works to improve safety measures for staff
- Works to reconfigure the space in the station in order to improve staff mobility
- Works to improve access for the public
- Carpark resurfacing, including the replacement of underground services and drainage
- The installation of electric vehicle charging stations
- Improved lighting system for the carpark
- Works on structural defects to the existing stone boundary wall and outhouses to the rear of the station

Minister Harris continued: "I am also delighted

to confirm the works will include the creation of suitable facilities for female staff members. I don't only want to see the station refurbished, I want to see it expanded and I will continue to work closely on that.

"This is an important investment in the station and reaffirms the Government's commitment to Greystones Garda station and its future.

"I am committed to making sure our local Gardaí have all the facilities they need in the local area and across Wicklow. It is of huge importance to me and the people of Wicklow that members of An Garda Síochána are equipped with all they require and are supported in their exceptional work.

"As Minister for Justice last year, I worked to ensure An Garda Síochána were protected in their jobs, by increasing the sentence for anyone who assaults a member of An Garda Síochána or attacks their vehicle."

Minister Harris concluded: "As a Minister in this Government, I will continue to campaign for an increased number of Gardaí in Wicklow and will tirelessly seek for them to be equipped with all the support they require during their service."



Ava Rose Kelly at the Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) Open Day on Friday.

## New disability access toilet at Brittas Bay

Works are ongoing to add a disability access toilet and improve existing facilities in Brittas Bay, as well as increase water storage capacity to ensure it doesn't run out on busy summer days. The works are set to be completed by the end of this month.

The works include:

- The new addition of a disability access toilet.
- The improvements of existing facilities on site.
- Increasing the water storage capacity

Speaking last Wednesday, Minister Simon Harris said: "I am delighted that much needed works are ongoing in Brittas Bay to improve facilities for people with disabilities. These works are set to be completed by the end of this month.

"I have been following this very closely over the past few months and was disappointed to hear works were delayed due to the bad weather in December.

"These accessibility improvements are now back in full flow and will be hugely important to people in the spring and summer months as the

weather improves. I want to thank all that have been working to progress these works. I know many Councillors, the County Council and the Wicklow District Council have been working tirelessly with me to get these progressed.

"It is also great news that a new larger water tank is being installed in the toilets at Brittas Bay to ensure water doesn't run out during busy summer days which has been an issue in the past."

Minister Harris concluded: "All these improvements make for better community life and most importantly allow everybody to enjoy the amazing amenities Wicklow has to offer. I will continue to campaign relentlessly for facilities across Wicklow to be improved and more accessible to all."



Daniel Kenny, Neal Maguire, Doug Cooney and Aibhin Kenny at the Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) Open Day last Friday.



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# SETU inspires over 4,350 'global citizens'



The final series of conferring ceremonies took place at South East Technological University (SETU's) campuses in Waterford and Carlow with the graduation of over 2,150 students and the awarding of two Honorary Doctorate awards. Pictured during conferring ceremonies at SETU's campus in Waterford were graduates of Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Care. Picture Patrick Browne, Brownes Photography.

Aligning with this year's global citizen theme, South East Technological University (SETU) is encouraging over 4,350 graduates to embark on their future path with a commitment to make a positive impact.

The week before last marked the culmination of the class of 2023's academic journey, as the final series of conferring ceremonies unfolded at SETU's campuses in Waterford and Carlow. Over 2,150 graduates, alongside two Honorary Doctors of the University, were honoured during ceremonies taking place from Wednesday 10th to Friday 12th January.

Awards were conferred on graduates from level 6 to level 10 and across a range of disciplines, from technology, business, and engineering to the arts, humanities, and science.

A total of 19 doctorates were awarded across both campuses, while the largest annual military graduation in the State from a higher education institution took place, with over 300 officers and enlisted personnel being awarded SETU qualifications.

The January ceremonies saw the award of the final two of five Honorary Doctorates to former Irish Ambassador to the United States, Daniel Mulhall, and internationally acclaimed writer Claire Keegan. Renowned actor Carrie Crowley, pioneering biomedical engineer, Annraoi de Paor, and Irish academic and former politician Dr

Maurice Manning were all bestowed with Honorary Doctorates at conferring ceremonies late last year.

President of SETU, Professor Veronica Campbell stated, "The candidates were nominated as their achievements align with the values of SETU, and we take immense pride in celebrating their remarkable accomplishments. I would like to extend my congratulations to all five candidates, including Daniel Mulhall and Claire Keegan on the award of their Honorary Doctorates at this week's ceremonies."

The awarding of the inaugural SETU Honorary Doctorates recognises the exceptional contribution of five candidates in shaping society and positively impacting people's lives both nationally and globally.

Prof. Campbell went on to acknowledge and commend SETU's PhD graduates, recognising that their knowledge, unwavering commitment, and hard work has led them to this significant moment.

Emphasising the transformative impact of their research, she said, "Through your meaningful contributions to your areas of research, you are playing no small part in contributing to creating a world-

class innovation region that will have a transformative impact on the south east region."

'Global citizens,' is a term synonymous with the university's aspirations for its graduates. A 'global citizen' is driven by the belief that everyone should have an equal chance to thrive. Addressing the graduates, Prof Campbell said, "Today is the first day of your next adventure, an adventure you begin as a graduate of SETU."

As learners who have studied in a progressive and inclusive university, you now have a responsibility to live by the values you have experienced in SETU and share the knowledge you have acquired to make an impact in the world."

During the conferring ceremonies, graduates are formally invited to record their signature in the roll book and are encouraged to perceive this as an active commitment to be a global citizen. Prof. Campbell urges SETU's graduates "to be part of a vibrant alumni that live by the values of fairness, respect, and integrity, that offer a voice of reason, working to heal divisions within the world. An alumni group that looks to define the future and make a positive impact on people's lives."

## SocDems candidate calls for new secondary school

**Social Democrats local election candidate for Wicklow Danny Alvey has called on the Department of Education to examine building a new secondary school for east Wicklow in Newtownmountkennedy.**

Land was zoned for community and education purposes as part of the Local Area Plan for the town, at least as far back as the 2002 edition, with the expectation it would be used to build a secondary school for the growing population. However no movement has been made by the Department to provide such a school and instead most students of the local primary schools attend second level at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann in Kilcoole.

"Towns and villages all across Wicklow are expanding rapidly due to house building but this Government is just not providing the necessary amenities and social services that are needed to match this growth," said Danny Alvey, who is a

native of Wicklow Town, now living in Newtown. "Most children here attend secondary school in the next closest town, Kilcoole, or nearby Greystones or Wicklow Town. However population growth has far outstripped the provision of secondary school places and this year places are under severe pressure for next September.

"Hundreds of new homes are being built in Newtown, Roundwood and Ashford, not to mention Wicklow Town and Greystones, but there is no plan as to where the children of these families will attend secondary school," continued Alvey. "Working with Jennifer Whitmore TD, we've written to the Department of Education to ask them for an update on secondary school places in east Wicklow and plans to build a new secondary school to cope with the increased demand that is coming down the line. Between the 2016 and 2022 census, the population of Newtown alone grew by 25% from 2,835 to 3,539. With at least 400 new houses being built in the town between

now and the next census, this number is going to increase considerably again. Newtown is already the 7th biggest town in all of county Wicklow but the only one in the top 10 towns by population size that does not have its own secondary school.

"I've been calling door to door over the past few months speaking with residents about the issues that matter most to them and a new secondary school and trying to get secondary school places is one of the issues most raised. A new school in Newtown could provide places for children from Newtown, Roundwood and Ashford and take pressure off the schools in Kilcoole, Greystones and Wicklow Town.

"If elected as a Councillor this June, I will keep the pressure on the Department of Education to deliver a new secondary school for Newtown," concluded Alvey. "I have two young children myself and I know how much unnecessary pressure finding school places is having on parents in this district."



Danny Alvey at the proposed site for Newtown secondary school.



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# Calls for reinstatement of West Wicklow Citizen Information Centre

Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District Councillor Edward Timmins is calling for the reinstatement of the West Wicklow Citizens Information Centre (CIC) to provide people with a confidential in-person advice service again. Funding for a dedicated Information Officer must now be considered, says Cllr Timmins.

"The history of the service dates to the 1960s when people came together to share factual information. Many CICs closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A phone and online service alone is not meeting the needs of our community who require independent advice on complex issues.

"Access to accurate information on areas like housing, employment, educational grants, pensions disabilities and other issues is needed through an independent service. Blessington and Baltinglass CICs played an integral part in community information provision. I commend all the dedicated volunteers who made the West Wicklow services a success for a long number of years.

"I disagree with many aspects of the Periodic Critical Review of the Citizens Information Board carried out in May 2022 by the Department of Social Protection including recommendation one which states that 'the provision of face-to-face information should be reviewed'. Sometimes there is just no substitute for face-to-face communication when it comes to complex issues."

Regarding the online and phone service Councillor Timmins pointed out: "Despite the existence of Citizens Information website citizensinformation.ie and Citizens Information



Cllr Edward Timmins

Information Services in Ireland' notes how many clients require more 'in-depth' assistance including people with disabilities. Furthermore, in-person services remain important in combatting rural isolation."

Regarding volunteers who worked in the service, Councillor Timmins remarked: "The outreach service worked well for many years with the commitment of dedicated volunteers. In fact, the original CIC service itself originated from volunteers coming together in their communities nationwide. A report entitled 'A review of Volunteers in the Citizens Information Services April 2023' highlighted the benefit of CICs in fostering a sense of belonging in the community. The Blessington CIC located in the library, and Baltinglass outreach centre based in the Credit Union, were a 'force for good' in the locality.

"We need this service reinstated and additional funding to be made available to hire a dedicated Information Officer. We should be ambitious in how any new service could work including a satellite service to other more rural villages across West Wicklow to meet the needs of our aging population."

Concluding, Cllr Timmins added: "At a time of so much misinformation, proper information services have never been more important."



Tilly Byrne pictured at the Wicklow RNLi annual wreath laying ceremony

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# Eight awards for young Wicklow scientists

Eight awards were given to projects from Co. Wicklow schools at the 60th BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (BTYSTE).

The winner of the 60th BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (BTYSTE) was Sean O'Sullivan, aged 17, a 5th year student from Colaiste Chiarain in Limerick. He won the top prize with his project, VerifyMe: A new approach to authorship attribution in the post-ChatGPT era. The BTYSTE perpetual trophy was presented to the winner at the RDS by Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD and Managing Director of BT Ireland, Shay Walsh.

Since OpenAI released ChatGPT in November of 2022, the line between human-written and AI-generated text has blurred, leaving academia and industry searching for a reliable method to discern 'true' human authorship. In his project, Sean considered the challenges of author verification in the context of the significant improvements in Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT. He developed a novel approach to author authentication that identifies stylistic differ-

ences to verify authorship. Eva Duffy from St. Mary's College in Arklow won The Housing Agency Award in the Social and Behavioural Sciences category for her project titled 'Housing Crisis - Could Retirement be the Key?'. Eva's project also won the 3rd Senior Individual award. Also from St. Mary's College, Ciara Hughes and Bronwyn Crummy won the Road Safety Authority award in the Social and Behavioural Sciences category for their

project 'I'm too texty for my car'. Their project also won the 3rd Intermediate Group award.

From Colaiste Chraobh Abhann, Kaya Munez, William Makarus and Rhys Thompson were highly commended in the Health & Wellbeing category for their project 'To what extent does post-exercise exhaustion impact memory retention?'. From Woodbrook College, Lily May O'Brien, Viola Formaro and Marcelina Kulanin were highly commended in the Biological & Ecological category for their project 'Does Our Menstrual Cycle Affect Our Physical Traits?'. From Gaelcholaiste na Mara, Cillian O'Suilleabhain and Donncha O'Raghallaigh were also highly commended in the Biological & Ecological category for their project 'Beet It: Anailís ar éifeachtaí an sú biaitais ar bhainistiú siomptóim asma' (Analysis of the effect of beet juice on the management of asthma symptoms).

From St. Mary's College, Alice Giles and Olivia Coey were Highly Commended in the Social & Behavioural Sciences category for their project 'Combating Homelessness: How Can Water Help?'. Speaking at the awards ceremony, Minister for Education Norma Foley TD said, "Meeting students exhibiting projects this week and witnessing the innovation, creativity and attention to detail which they have applied

to their research has been a great honour. As the 2022 results of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show, 15-year-olds in Ireland significantly outperform many of their counterparts across the OECD in science. The BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition continues to demonstrate the breadth of what's possible in our world when open and inquiring minds ask questions and explore new opportunities and solutions. Along with the Government, I am committed to continuing to promote uptake in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in our schools for the benefit of all learners."

Shay Walsh, Managing Director of BT Ireland, which organises the exhibition, concluded by saying: "While the calibre of entries across the board has been outstanding, on behalf of all the team at BT Ireland, I would like to congratulate all the finalists of the 2024 exhibition and thank them for sharing their remarkable ideas and innovations with us. And to all this year's winners, we look forward to seeing the future impact you will all undoubtedly make. Lastly, a special word of thanks to the teachers, parents, and guardians for their ongoing support, as well as our panel of expert judges, partners, volunteers and the BT team more broadly. This is a collective effort and one we are incredibly proud to be part of."



Eva Duffy from St. Mary's College, Arklow, won The Housing Agency Award in the Social and Behavioural Sciences category for her project titled 'Housing Crisis - Could Retirement be the Key?'. Eva's project also won the 3rd Senior Individual award.



Cillian O'Suilleabhain and Donncha O'Raghallaigh from Gaelcholaiste na Mara were highly commended for their project which examined the effects of beet juice on asthma symptoms



Isobel Byrne and Erin Tobin from St. Mary's College



Rhys Thompson, William Makarus and Kaya Munez from Colaiste Chraobh Abhann, pictured with Minister Stephen Donnelly, were highly commended in the Health & Wellbeing category for their project 'To what extent does post-exercise exhaustion impact memory retention?'.



Tara Tierney, Sarah Downes and teacher Aileen Wall Adderley from Avondale Community College with Minister Stephen Donnelly



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Denyse Campbell, IHF President and Cyril Brennan, Tulfarris Hotel - IHF Wicklow Branch Employee of the Year.

## Hotels Federation announces Wicklow employee of the Year

Cyril Brennan, Senior Conference & Banqueting Bartender at Tulfarris Hotel & Golf Resort, has been announced as the 23/24 Irish Hotels Federation Wicklow Branch 'Employee of the Year'. The announcement was made at an awards lunch in Glenview Hotel & Leisure Club, where guests gathered to celebrate and recognise nominees from hotels and guesthouses across Wicklow who have made an outstanding contribution to their workplace.

Congratulating Cyril on the award, IHF Wicklow Branch Chair, Gerard O'Brien said the judges highlighted his dedication, experience, and unwavering commitment to service when selecting him as the winner.

At the event, IHF President, Denyse Campbell spoke about the importance of recognising excellence, and 'Shaping Brighter Futures' for people in the sector by supporting future leaders and keeping teams motivated with opportunities for career progression and development.

Cyril joined the team at Tulfarris a little over 10 years ago, however he has been working within the wider hospitality industry for over 50 years, equipping him with a vast wealth of knowledge and expertise. Cyril's colleagues say that he is a beloved team member and an exceptional hospitality professional - referencing his passion, dedication and innate ability to make guests smile.

IHF Wicklow Branch extends its gratitude to the expert judging panel comprised of Eileen Cullen (Director of Kildare/Wicklow ETB) and Linda Folan (General Manager, Maldron Hotel Newlands Cross), who had the difficult job of selecting a winner from the nominees. The members of the IHF Wicklow Branch now wish Cyril the very best of luck as he goes on to represent them at the upcoming National IHF Employee of the Year Awards which will be held during the IHF's Annual Conference in February 2024.

# Wicklow tourism businesses attend launch of 2024 marketing plan

Tourism Ireland has launched details of its marketing strategy and plan to promote Ireland overseas in 2024, at an event attended by Tourism Minister Catherine Martin and around 550 tourism industry leaders from around the country - including Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort and Powerscourt Hotel Resort & Spa.

Tourism Ireland aims to increase the overall economic value of overseas tourism to Ireland, growing revenue by an average +5.6% per year over the next six years to 2030. The organisation will also sustainably support the economies of communities across the island, growing revenue to our regions outside of

the peak season by an average +6.5% per year to 2030.

This year, Tourism Ireland will roll out an extensive and targeted programme of activity with a marketing budget of €70 million.

Tourism Ireland believes that 2024 offers significant opportunity for overseas tourism.

Ireland has an award-winning tourism product, a committed industry and there are excellent relationships in place with the international travel trade. There are opportunities to grow revenue, especially outside of the

peak season when there is capacity ready to be filled. And there are lots of exciting and inspiring stories to tell potential overseas visitors - particularly about off-season events such as Halloween, which originated in Ireland around 2,000 years ago.

Tourism Ireland will play a vital role in 2024 to meet these opportunities. Using data-driven marketing, the organisation will remain nimble, serving the right message to the right audience at the right time - thus stimulating demand from high value overseas tourists and matching demand to supply. Tourism Ireland will focus on tourists with évalue adding tourism traisí i.e., those people who have funds to travel, who prize memorable experiences and tend to travel around regions

and across seasons.

Alice Mansergh, Chief Executive Designate of Tourism Ireland, said: "2023 was the first full year of trading for tourism since the pandemic. Tourism Ireland was active throughout the year, with an extensive and targeted programme of activity marketing Ireland around the world. In 2024, our aim is to increase the value of overseas tourism to Ireland, sustainably supporting economies, communities and the environment. We will do so

by inspiring overseas visitors and strengthening strategic partnerships. Our message is that Ireland has so much to offer across regions and seasons. We will be showcasing iconic reasons to travel here, expanding people's bucket lists from best-known spots to our hidden gems. It's an exciting year ahead, as this year marks the 10th anniversary of the Wild Atlantic Way, providing Tourism Ireland with another great hook to showcase the iconic route."



Sarah Hayes, Tourism Ireland; and Denise Corboy, Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort, at the launch of Tourism Ireland's 2024 marketing plan in Dublin.



Orla Byrne, Powerscourt Hotel Resort & Spa; Carlo Boersma, MHL Hotel Collection; and Sarah Hayes, Tourism Ireland, at the launch of Tourism Ireland's 2024 marketing plan in Dublin.

# Local Enterprise Office clients created over 774 jobs in 2023

Companies supported by Wicklow Local Enterprise Office (LEO) created over 774 jobs in 2023. This was a seven per cent increase on 2022 and resulted in a net employment gain of 69.

The new figures show that the LEO Wicklow financially supported 161 small businesses in their portfolio across the county and these companies in turn employ 774 people.

The net jobs created by Local Enterprise Office Wicklow supported clients in 2023 was 69, which takes into account companies that amalgamated, ceased trading and those that transferred on to Enterprise Ireland.

The Local Enterprise Offices also provide substantial funded supports to other small businesses with programmes such as the Trading Online Voucher, Lean for Business and Green for Business along with training and mentoring.

Commenting on the figures, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Kennedy Flynn, said: "The results announced today are a testament to Ireland's small business community. When faced with adversity, they have adapted, pivoted, upskilled and did whatever it took to sustain themselves. The figures show that companies have seen the opportunities in the challenging trading conditions they have faced.

"The Local Enterprise Offices across the country have gone above and beyond in their support of small

businesses but there is renewed optimism. We are seeing new opportunities for Irish businesses here and as always with tough economic periods we see new ideas and companies emerge and flourish. This year will be no different and as we continue to work closely with Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities to ensure our small businesses get the best possible supports there are certainly green shoots emerging across the county."

Emer O'Gorman, CE, Wicklow County Council, stated: "In 2023 LEO Wicklow has supported an impressive selection of small businesses and assisted them to create new jobs and to continue to innovate and start exporting, despite the challenges in retaining and hiring staff. Micro businesses across Wicklow are resilient and keen to embrace the supports on offer to work smarter and become more competitive no matter what sector they're in. The team in LEO Wicklow and Wicklow County Council are ensuring that every business has access to support no matter how small and we have local expertise to help them succeed."

The total national figures for the Local Enterprise Offices across the country showed that the LEOs now financially support 38,726 jobs across 7,167 compa-

nies. This is the most jobs the Local Enterprise Offices have supported nationally since their inception in 2014.

In 2023 there were 6,640 new jobs created by LEO client companies with a net jobs creation figure of 2,131. This was up six per cent nationally on 2022. From the jobs created, 82 per cent were outside of the Dublin region.

Minister Neale Richmond TD said: "I have been fortunate enough to visit many Local Enterprise Offices and I have seen first-hand the superb quality of their mentorship and supports, and the impact they have on the businesses and entrepreneurs they support. These results are a testament to our Local Enterprise Offices; ten consecutive years of job growth is a major accomplishment that reminds us how crucial their support is both for new businesses, but also in helping existing businesses to grow.

"With 82 per cent of new jobs created outside of Dublin, it is clear that our Local Enterprise Offices are supporting businesses right across Ireland. What is also evident is the resilience of Ireland's fantastic small businesses that have continued to adapt to an ever-changing business environment."

Carol Gibbons, Head of Regions and Local Enterprise at Enterprise Ireland, stated: "2023 was a challenging year for business and these very positive employment results are a testament to the dedication

and commitment of the LEO network across the country and the ambitious businesses it supports.

"Key to the success of the LEO network is the close relationship it fosters with both start-up and scaling businesses across communities. Enterprise Ireland will continue to work closely with the LEO network in 2024 to ensure that all businesses can access the support and advice they need to start, grow and win in all markets."

Minister Simon Harris said "LEOs play a really important role in communities across the county for small businesses and entrepreneurs, providing expert advice, mentorship, as well as financial supports. As a local TD and as a Government Minister I fully support the work conducted by LEOs throughout the County. I am glad to confirm that LEOs have for 10 consecutive years seen continued job growth. This just shows how vital the work of LEOs is to the community and to businesses.

"From supporting businesses to move online through the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, to helping businesses 'go green' with the Green for Business Scheme and the new Energy Efficiency Grant, LEO support can make a huge difference to our small businesses.

"I am also glad to confirm that 82% of new jobs created outside of Dublin, it is clear that our LEOs are supporting businesses right across Ireland. What is also evident is the resilience of Ireland's fantastic small businesses that have continued to adapt to an ever-changing business environment across Ireland, the LEO network supported over 38,700 jobs from over 7,000 businesses in 2023 alone. Nationwide, a total of 6,640 jobs were created with the support of LEOs in 2023. I will always be proud to back business and our LEOs; in Budget 2024, an additional €9 million in funding was secured to ensure that LEOs can continue to support our entrepreneurs across Wicklow."

# Wicklow project highlighted in new booklet celebrating 25 years of Heritage Officer work

A special Heritage Council publication featuring stories from heritage officers in every county was launched last week to mark 25 years since the Heritage Officer Network was founded. The booklet, 'Opening the door to Ireland's heritage', details one key heritage project from each local authority from the last three years which collectively highlight the enormous contribution the Network has made to the preservation of our heritage over the last quarter of a century.

The booklet tells the story of Wicklow's Brittas Bay Conservation Project which instigated number of actions to better manage the most valuable habitats in the county along its coastal areas. These areas have been experiencing severe management issues and threats due to recreational pressure and climate change.

Brittas Bay north and south beaches and dunes are key coastal properties in Wicklow County Council's ownership. It was identified that there was an information gap about the status of the species in the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a lack of an agreed vision for managing the biodiversity of these popular beach amenities. The Brittas Bay Conservation Project set out to fill in this information gap and since 2019, has implemented a series of measures and projects to manage dune vegetation, increase biodiversity awareness, engage volunteer effort to tackle invasive species and promote the long-term conservation of the area's natural heritage.

In a partnership between the Heritage Council and local authorities, the first heritage officers were appointed in 1999 in Kerry, Sligo and Galway with the aim of raising awareness of



'Dawn in the Dunes' event for National Biodiversity Week (May 2022). Photo: Deirdre Burns

heritage issues within the local authority and among local communities. Since then, the heritage officer network has become synonymous with the protection and promotion of Ireland's heritage and for the first time in 2021, every local authority in the country had appointed somebody to the role.

While highlighting the important work they do, the stories in the publication also offer a stark insight into what may have been lost were it not for the heritage officers. Mangan's Clock in the heart of Cork city may have fallen into disrepair. The most historic buildings in Ballyshannon or

Listowel may have been left derelict and allowed to crumble. The natural beach and dune habitats along the coast of Wicklow may have become irrevocably degraded and the craftsmanship of dry-stone walling on Inis Oirr may have receded.

Wicklow County Council Cathaoirleach, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy and County Council Chief Executive, Emer O'Gorman warmly welcomed the launch of the new publication, stating: "We are delighted to see this new publication which shines a light on some of the amazing initiatives taking place at local authority level. We

particularly wish to pay tribute to our own Heritage Officer Deirdre Burns who consistently drives forward an ambitious and innovative programme to embed heritage protection into the hearts of our communities and into all our council activities."

Speaking on the launch of the booklet, Heritage Officer for Wicklow County Council Deirdre Burns said: "It is deeply satisfying to see documented in this publication the influence of the Heritage Officer Network in shaping our approach to heritage conservation and protection. Although we work as individuals at local

authority level, what is clear from these pages is that the real strength of the Network is in the collective. These stories cover only a snapshot of recently completed projects from current heritage officers, so when we factor in the hundreds of past projects completed since 1999, it brings into the focus the enormous impact that the Local Authority Heritage Officer Programme has had."

Chairperson of the Heritage Council Martina Moloney added: "I have had the pleasure of working extensively with our Heritage Officers over many years and am constantly amazed by the sheer variety of their work which is excellently captured in this beautiful publication. Not only do they provide advice, guidance, and information on all aspects of heritage, but they also secure funding, undertake research, collect data, and



develop and lead a multitude of highly impactful and engaging projects. Raising awareness locally, Heritage Officers inspire communities to value and take ownership of their important local heritage in all its forms. What their work achieves, ultimately, is that it opens the door to our heritage for people across Ireland and further afield, so that it can be

enjoyed and appreciated by everyone."

John Mulholland, Chair of the CCMA Rural Development, Community, Culture and Heritage (RCCH) Committee also attended the launch, and said: "What has always stood out to me about the Heritage Officer Network is the range and number of individuals, groups and fun-

ders involved in the projects they undertake. It is very difficult to keep such a diverse range of interested parties singing off the same hymn sheet and getting the job done. This is the silent but tireless work of the Heritage Officers at play, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude. On behalf of the CCMA, I commend them for their dedication."

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Wicklow Heritage Officer Deirdre Burns (second from right) at the launch of the booklet in the Newpark Hotel in Kilkenny with CEO of the Heritage Council Virginia Teehan (left), Minister for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan TD (second from left) and Chairperson of the Heritage Council Martina Moloney (right)

# 45th Bray One Act Drama Festival

There was a great turn out at the launch of the 45th Bray One Act Drama Festival on Thursday 12th January, when casts, crew and patrons gathered in the Mermaid Arts centre to hear what was in store for the 23rd - 27th January.

And from all accounts, it looks like the festival will be bringing a wonderful mix of comedy and drama to the Mermaid stage. Performed by both newcomers and seasoned performers, these plays are sure to provide 5 nights of scintillating entertainment, with all proceeds going to charitable causes.

At the launch, it was announced that popular adjudicator, Michael McCabe, will be making a welcome return. The Festival runs in the Mermaid Arts Centre from Tuesday 23rd to Saturday 27th January 2024. Tickets are available from [www.mermaidartscentre.ie](http://www.mermaidartscentre.ie) or the box office on 01 2724030.



Geraldine Gilroy, Hilda Roche, Tracey Byrne, Miriam McKeever, Beth Holmes, Jean Kelly and Clare Timmons-ICA, at the launch of the 45th Bray One Act Drama Festival



Marie McCourt, Ray Beatty, Nick Russell and Sheena Griffin at the launch of the 45th Bray One Act Drama Festival



Balally Players - Joanne Keane Patrick Hand at the launch of the 45th Bray One Act Drama Festival

## Artists in sync: Brand new duo Dream A Lot are taking the world of cinematic soundtracks by storm

### New Year

*A poem by Barbara Murphy, from the Bray Sea Scribes writers group*

Out with the old! In with the new  
Sticking to resolutions, I never do!  
January shopping in the Dunne's Bray sales  
I am dreading getting on those weighing scales!

Back to work, it's all over, another year ahead.  
Do more walking, eat less, some pounds to shed!  
Looking forward to brighter longer days.  
Remembering the year that has passed, it's gone  
in a haze.

Out with the old! In with the new!  
Eight weeks of Operation Transformation to  
view!  
All that exercise I plan to do!  
Remembering those who are no longer with us  
Thinking of them, praying for them and shedding  
some tears

So welcome 2024, a special year with one extra  
day which we only get in every four!  
Here's hoping there will be many more!

**Dream A Lot is a brand new award winning duo consisting of London born Composer/Producer/Drummer Gus Crawford Collins and Singer/Songwriter/Producer - TV's The Voice Finalist Kim Hayden from Wicklow.**

The all new duo are experiencing huge success this year having created the trailer soundtrack for Netflix's hit show Harlan Coben's 'Fool Me Once', now record breaking No.1 in over 60 countries, starring Michelle Keegan and Joanna Lumley. Their powerful reimagine of Christina Aguilera's 'Fighter' which represents main character 'Maya' throughout the series is the first ever trailerized cover of the hit song to be cleared personally by Christina Aguilera for use in a theatrical release.

Taking the world of Sync by storm in 2023 with their reimagine of Frank Sinatra's 'Fly Me To The Moon' for Apple TV's 'Hello Tomorrow' trailer. Their sultry arrangement of Kylie Minogue's 'Can't Get You Out Of My Head' for Netflix's 'Obsession' trailer followed closely. In November they took home the award for

'Best Use Of Music' for Netflix's 'Obsession' Trailer at the Promax awards.

The duo recently landed a record breaking seven placements in the latest season of ITV's hit show 'Love Island' along with other placements for the US hit show 'The Golden Bachelor' and Lionsgate feature film production 'Unsung Hero'.

Dream A Lot are now turning the heads of some of the biggest music supervisors and editors in the business, winning their first Hollywood block buster trailer for the brand new feature film 'Mothers Instinct' starring Anne Hathaway and Jessica Chastain which is (due to be released in the coming weeks).

Dream A Lot's exciting and unique new sound in the world of Soundtracks, Trailers, TV & Promos is set to create a very exciting future for the duo.





# Feis Dhoire Cholmcille - take part in one of Ireland's premier cultural showcases

**Founded 102 years ago, Feis Dhoire Cholmcille is simply one of Ireland's most eminent feiseanna highlighting the beauty and depth of our national culture.**

Since 1922, the Feis has welcomed many thousands of young people and adults through its doors and in turn sent them out into the world with added confidence and expertise. Many former competitors have gone on to achieve fame in the world of the arts, cinema, and music. Amongst those who have credited Derry Feis as being the launching pad for their highly successful careers include Phil Coulter, Dana, Roma Downey, Bronagh Gallagher and Jonny McDaid from the band Snow Patrol.

Aisling Bonner, Secretary of Feis Dhoire Cholmcille said: "It's true that the feis has launched many successful careers in the world of the arts, but it is to those who just want to be part of it that we will always owe the greatest debt of

gratitude. Many children may only perform a handful of times throughout their school days but what they will gain in terms of being able to communicate confidently for the rest of their lives, in work and personal relationships is equally as valuable, if not more so than a successful stage, musical or film career."

Held during Easter week from 1925 onwards, this year Feis Dhoire Cholmcille will take place from Tuesday 2 April until Friday 5 April. The venues for the feis this year will be the famed St Columb's Hall in the

heart of Derry city centre and The Playhouse, Artillery Street just a few hundred yards away from the main venue.

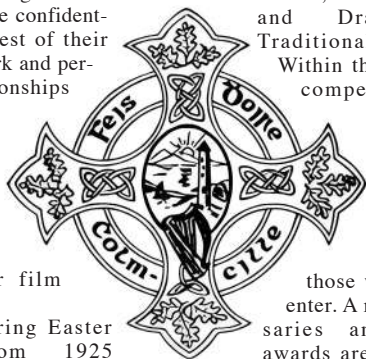
Feis Dhoire Cholmcille boasts a range of seven different disciplines - An Ceol; An Teanga; History; Classical Music; Rince; Speech and Drama and Traditional Music.

Within the dozens of competitions on offer there is always something to suit the taste and talents of those who wish to enter. A range of bursaries and special awards are also available across the disciplines and the details of those, and the full syllabus is available to download on the main page of [www.derryfeis.com](http://www.derryfeis.com).

Entries for this year's feis are open and can be made online at: [www.derryfeis.com/page/enter-online](http://www.derryfeis.com/page/enter-online). And, a wide range of the accommodation available in the historic city of Derry can be found at: <https://www.visitderry.com/accommodation>.

The Irish dancing section of Feis Dhoire Cholmcille is an open platform and is proud to be the only stage where competitors from An Comdhail and An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha perform side by side.

Aisling Bonner added: "We in Derry have also been known for our warm welcome and Derry Feis has welcomed competitors from the four corners of the globe over the decades. Come join us this Easter and find out for yourself. If you have any questions for us simply message us on Facebook where our page called 'Derry Feis' can be easily found."



*Arklow Roots Music presents an intimate concert event of Irish music and song on Thursday 25th January at 8.30pm, featuring recording artist Bernie Pháid from The Dingle Peninsula in Kerry, accompanied by guitarist Dave Clancy from Galway. Support will be from local trio John Stafford, Denis Nolan and Catherine Noone. The concert is on in the Bridge Hotel Arklow and is on donation basis on the night. Reserve your place on Eventbrite. In her wide-ranging, bilingual repertoire, Bernie Ph-id manages to combine uplifting, rootsy numbers with achingly honest ballads, all the while captivating the audience with her infectious warmth. Her music can be sampled on her website [berniephaid.com](http://berniephaid.com) and on YouTube.*

## Roger Doyle in Concert

Mermaid Arts Centre, Thursday 8th February

**Following on from his recent concert at Killruddery House, Bray-based composer and pianist Roger Doyle presents a concert both of his solo piano music, and also music for piano and synchronised electronic backing track.**

The music he will perform includes parts of the onstage piano score he composed for the Gate Theatre's celebrated production of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, music for the soundtrack of the silent film *Budawanny* and live performance from his new album *Finnegans Wake - Suite Of Affections* where specially chosen excerpts from James Joyce's book are spoken by a top Irish actress Derbhle Crotty, and set to music.

Finally 'Lucia's Dance' in memory of Joyce's daughter, choreographed by Tara Nixon O'Neill with video. Please visit his website [rogerdoyle.com](http://rogerdoyle.com)

A review in *The Journal Of Music* of Doyle's solo piano album *Baby Grand* said: 'These works are magnificent multi-layered miniatures infused with the stylistic pluralism that sets Doyle out from the crowd. As throughout, Doyle's own playing here is impeccably realised, admirably poised and exquisitely nimble'. CDs will be on sale after the concert.



Roger Doyle

## Music Network presents Niamh Dunne, Bróna McVittie, Cormac Breatnach & Seán Óg Graham

Coollattin House on 17th February

**Music Network's Spring 2024 season begins on 6th February with a quartet of highly acclaimed traditional musicians: Niamh Dunne, Bróna McVittie, Cormac Breatnach and Seán Óg Graham.**

Founding members of Beoga, Niamh Dunne brings gorgeous vocals and fantastic fiddle playing to the collaboration while Seán Óg Graham adds his extraordinary musicianship, showcasing his talents on both guitar and button accordion.

Legendary whistle player and creative force behind the iconic Deiseal, Cormac Breatnach will complete the line-up alongside vocalist and harper Bróna McVittie, undoubtedly one of the most innovative and inspirational artists to have emerged on the scene in recent years.

The tour will also feature a new composition by Bróna McVittie; a commission from Music Network which she is currently working on, freshly titled 'Ten Thousand Tiny Fingers'. Describing her creative process she says, "I wanted to create something in memoriam of all the innocent civilians killed in the Israel-Gaza conflict, particularly the children. The song is also borne of my own experience of conflict growing up in a segregated society during the troubles in Northern Ireland. It's probably the hardest thing I've ever tried to compose, but I'm determined to

create something uplifting."

Niamh Dunne is an accomplished musician known for her unique traditional fiddle playing, folk-infused compositions and warm, smoky vocal style. She released her first album of self-penned songs *Tides* in 2022 to critical acclaim. Dunne has performed with the well known Dunne family for many years and with the renowned Grammy-nominated Beoga, best known for their Irish fusion music and their work with Ed Sheeran.

Widely regarded as one of Ireland's top button accordion players, Seán Óg Graham has recorded 7 albums as a key member of Beoga, who *The Wall Street Journal* described as "the most exciting band to come out of Ireland this century". When the band performed on Ed Sheeran's album *÷*, it was Graham's own composition 'Minute 5' that provided the musical backdrop to the global hit 'Galway Girl'. Graham is in high demand on the folk/traditional music scene and has featured on over 40 albums and played all over the world.

Acclaimed whistle player Cormac Breatnach is a founding member of the iconic band

Deiseal, founded in 1993. The *Irish Times* described their sound as "extraordinarily compelling" and referred to a "virtuosity that was breathtaking". Breatnach's playing can be heard on more than 50 albums including with *Riverdance* and on his own solo albums He has also recorded on film soundtracks as well as on award-winning TV programmes.

Pioneering her own brand of cosmic folk, singer and harper Bróna McVittie deftly reimagines traditional folk and crafts her own nature-inspired songs with a rich mix of ethnic and electronic instruments. Her debut solo album *We Are the Wildlife*, released in 2018, earned her a string of four-star reviews from *MOJO*, *Uncut*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Her second album *The Man in the Mountain* followed in 2020 and immediately scored the much-coveted *Folk Album of the Month* spot in *The Guardian*.

Expect the unexpected as this quartet combines traditional and contemporary music, taking melodies on unexpected journeys and presenting old songs in new ways, all the while enhanced by expertly crafted arrangements.



Toyota C-HR

# Toyota is Ireland's No.1 best-selling car brand for the 3rd year running

It's 25 years since Toyota Ireland embraced electrified motoring - introducing the Prius to the Irish motoring public, starting with the unveiling of the new car at Mt. Juliet in Co. Kilkenny.

By Martin McCarthy

The journey started there and last year Hybrid models (including Hybrid Electric and Plug-in Hybrid) accounted for 26.82% of the Irish market in 2023, overtaking diesel for the first time.

2023 was a great year for the brand in Ireland guided skilfully by the same Mahony family importer that they began in earnest with in 1970s. The highlights of last year were:

- Toyota continues as Ireland's most loved car brand, closing out 2023 with a market-leading share of 13.57%.
- Toyota sold 16,532 cars, with 4 models featuring in the top 10 best-sellers.
- Electrified vehicles, including hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid and battery electric, lead with 45.52% combined market share.

Toyota has closed out 2023 as Ireland's best-selling car brand,

making it three years in a row for the Irish owned business. Toyota sold 16,532 cars in 2023, 3,164 more than the next best-seller, with a market leading share of 13.57%.

Electrified driving continues to prove hugely popular among Irish drivers, with hybrid electric and plug-in hybrid securing a combined market share of 26.82% - 4.66% higher than diesel which once again dropped, to 22.16% of total sales, a reduction of 4.58% compared to 2022.

In 2018, Toyota became the first brand to cease diesel production for mass market passenger cars and in 2023 its electrified models represented 92.8% of its entire annual sales. Toyota Ireland offers the widest range of hybrid electric cars on the market, reflecting the growing consumer

demand for more environmentally friendly, low-emission vehicles, which are playing an important role in moving drivers away from diesel to electrified driving. Hybrid electric has proven to be the sweet spot for those looking to make a positive change and embrace electrified driving without compromise.

Steve Tormey, Chief Executive Officer Toyota Ireland, said: "2023 proved to be another strong year for Toyota Ireland, and our third successive as Ireland's best-seller. As a brand that has championed sustainable and electrified motoring for years, seeing hybrid electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles overtake diesel for the first time feels like vindication for making the tough, but right, decision to pull out of diesel back in 2018 when it was by far the most popular seller."

## One-stop shop for advice needed for agricultural and horticultural sector

Independent Senator Victor Boyhan has called on the government to introduce enhanced incentives for renewable energy initiatives so that Ireland agri-sector can be supported to meet its climate targets.

Senator Boyhan, a member of the Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine, said farmers and horticultural growers and food producers recognised the importance of alternative sustainable energy, but not all are convinced of the financial benefits over set up costs and investment, which is why a one-stop shop for advice is necessary.

He also said that the Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue should collaborate with Minister Eamon Ryan's department about the need to encourage more farmers' to use solar panels.

Rooftop solar panels are one of the most reliable forms of renewable energy. They are a very cost-effective way to self-generate electricity, and tax incentives already exist to encourage their use. Peak performance is from March to October, an ideal technology option for robotic dairy, poultry and pig farms that are significant electricity users.

Some of the benefits include:

- Significantly reduce electricity costs
- Payback period as low as 4-7 years
- Capital allowances

Senator Boyhan said, Irish farmers' interest in on-farm renewable technologies continues to grow and is most welcome. New renewable and energy efficient options are still in development, and that's progress."

He continued to say, "We need to encourage all farmers to avail of the support options available and to help ensure that the agriculture sector plays its part in Ireland's transition to a low-carbon economy and society, I believe a One Stop Shop for renewable energy advice, incentives and grants for the agricultural sector needs to be established across the country."

Senator Boyhan concluded his remarks by saying, "This government has committed to dramatically reducing emissions by 2030. We must ensure that rural Ireland is not left behind by incentivising people to make environmentally friendly choices that benefit them."



Senator Victor Boyhan

### PLANNING

FOLIO: WW15512F  
WW19524F

land at Commons, Rathnew and Folio Numbers WW32887, WW1932F and WW1218F

COUNTY: Wicklow

In the matter of the Registration of Title Acts 1964 to 2006

In the matter of the Application of Pavels Nadezdins and Jekaterina Nadezdina for the Registration of a Right Acquired by Prescription.

Application No. D2020LR112439A

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Take notice that Kenny Boyd & Company, Solicitors have lodged an application on behalf of Pavels Nadezdins and Jekaterina Nadezdina the registered owners of Folios WW15512F WW19524F, under Section 49A of the above Act for the Registration of a Right of Way for domestic purposes with or without vehicles and cars to pass and repass from the public road at point X on the attached map (coloured yellow) to point Y

The original map showing the right of way may be inspected at Tailta Éireann, Chancery Street, Dublin 7.

All persons objecting to such Registration are hereby required to file their objection in writing duly verified within one calendar month from the date of publication of this notice.

In the absence of objection or in the event of any objection not being sustained the application will proceed without further notice.

Dated this day 23rd of January 2024

Niamh Moloney

Assistant Principal Officer

Tailta Éireann

Chancery Street

Dublin 7

#### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Elizabeth Cullen and Howard Smith seek permission for (A) demolition of the existing converted garage, boiler house & chimney, conservatory & side porch, (B) alterations to the front, rear & side elevations including the addition of new front & rear facing first floor windows and (C) widening of the existing entrance gateway to a maximum of 3.5 metres, installation of an electric sliding gate and all associated site works at No.5 Mountainview Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, A63 ED70. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

#### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Anthony Quinn & Louise Velling seek Planning Permission for (1) the construction of a new two storey side extension to the existing dwelling house, measuring 53 sqm and comprising of a bedroom, bathroom, sitting room, study & storage area (2) the relocation of the existing waste water percolation area associated with the existing waste water treatment system, all with associated site works at 'Glen Heste', Manor Kilbride, Blessington, Co. Wicklow W91RW80. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

#### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Knockanree Upper, Avoca, Co. Wicklow. I, Patrick Kinsella Intend To Apply To Wicklow County Council For Planning Permission To: (A) Construction of a new home office and garage / storage area, (B) All associated site works, all at above address. This Planning Application may be inspected at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of the Planning Authority during its public opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the Planning Authority on payment of the prescribed fee €20.00 with the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the Authority of the application. Such submissions or observations will be considered by the Planning Authority in making a decision on the application. The Planning Authority may grant permission subject to or without conditions, or may refuse to grant permission.

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# Nominations now open for 2024 EY Entrepreneur of the Year programme

The 2024 EY Entrepreneur Of The Year (EOY) programme is officially open for nominations. Entrepreneurs from emerging, established, and international businesses operating across all industry sectors in Wicklow invited to submit their nominations between now and 29th February.

The theme for this year's programme is The Trailblazers. Entrepreneurial trailblazers are true leaders with the courage and capacity to plot and follow their own path, pushing conventional boundaries and limits.

Through their exploration of new technologies, sciences, applications and markets, Ireland's entrepreneurs provide innovative answers and solutions to many of today's greatest challenges. They are often pioneers within their respective industries both in Ireland and across global markets. They forge their own unique trail to enable their companies, people, and the wider economy to reach new heights and aspirations.

EOY Alumni, Sam Moffett, CEO and Founder, Moffett Automated Storage and 2023 Entrepreneur of the Year commented: "Being sel-

ected as a finalist for the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year programme was such an honour. Winning my category and the overall award was a dream come true, however the programme is so much more than an awards night. The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year alumni includes over 600 previous finalists. They are an incredible group of leading entrepreneurs from all sectors throughout the island of Ireland. They understand what it is like to run their own business and have experienced many of the highs and lows that come with it. Everyone in the group is willing to share their experience and insights as well as provide practical advice and support. I feel so privileged to be part of this group and would wholeheartedly recommend this programme to any entrepreneurs who are

thinking about getting involved."

Roger Wallace, Partner Lead for EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Ireland said: "We are very excited to invite entrepreneurs from across Ireland to submit their nominations for the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2024 programme. Now in its 27th year, the programme exists to acclaim, drive, and inspire entrepreneurship across our island. This year we are celebrating the trailblazing entrepreneurs who are spearheading incredible businesses that are contributing to the growth of Ireland's economy and local communities. Irish entrepreneurs continue to have a disproportionate global impact, reflecting an international scaling mindset and innate capacity to grow and succeed across borders and cultures.

"One of the greatest strengths of Ireland's entrepreneurial ecosystem is its diverse composition. For this reason, we are actively seeking and encouraging nominations from entrepreneurs of all ages and from all industries and locations.

"24 finalists will be selected for this year's programme. As finalists they will participate in an exciting strategic growth programme over a 10-month period, including a week-long CEO Retreat to South Africa. They

will also be welcomed into our acclaimed alumni community where they will have the opportunity to learn from and be inspired by many of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs who remain the heartbeat of the programme."

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year alumni community comprises more than 600 entrepreneurs representing some of the greatest business minds across the island of Ireland. Collectively these businesses employ more than 250,000 people and generate revenues in excess of €23 billion.

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year programme is open to entrepreneurs from all sectors and growth stages in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The awards programme is divided into three categories - Emerging, Established and International - with eight finalists chosen per category.

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Sustainability Award will also be presented to one of the finalists in recognition of their business' significant contribution towards achieving and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The 24 finalists will be selected by an independent judging panel, comprising former winners, and chaired by Harry

Hughes CEO of Portwest, who takes over the role from Anne Heraty CEO of CPL Resources plc.

Speaking at the launch, Harry Hughes, CEO of Portwest and Chairperson of the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Judging Panel said: "I'm honoured to take up the role of Chairperson of the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Judging Panel this year. Since winning EY Entrepreneur Of The Year in 2017, I have remained very much involved in the programme through the alumni network. Being part of this programme and its network has been hugely beneficial for me, both personally and professionally. The programme strongly advocates for entrepreneurs knowing just how significant a contribution they make to the growth and success of our economy and communities. We know that across the island of Ireland there are



The 2024 EY Entrepreneur Of The Year (EOY) programme is open for nominations. Pictured, Eimear McCrann, Director, EY Entrepreneur Of The Year, Roger Wallace, Partner Lead for EY Entrepreneur of the Year, Sam Moffett, managing director and founder of Moffett Automated Storage Ltd and EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2023, at the launch of the 2024 EY Entrepreneur Of The Year programme. Photograph: Naoise Culhane

many brilliant, pioneering entrepreneurs who are achieving incredible success and I want to encourage them to take the opportunity to submit their nominations for this year's EY Entrepreneur Of The Year programme. Taking part in the EOY programme could be the essential next step they need to take to elevate their business and scale new heights."

The EY Entrepreneur

Of The Year Ireland programme is supported by Premium Corporate Sponsor Julius Baer International, and Government sponsors Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland.

Anyone interested can find out more or complete an online nomination form at [www.eoy.ie](http://www.eoy.ie). Those nominating someone else must do so with the entrepreneur's consent.

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