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ROUND IRELAND
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MADE IN WICKLOW
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Tuesday 6th February 2024 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

PROBLEMS WITH SCHOOL BUSES

Lack of school transport continues to impact many families across Wicklow. Correspondence from Bus Eireann last week confirmed that there are still three outstanding services that were due to run in 2023 yet to be made operational. 53 pupils on route B9212 which operates from Ashford to Wicklow have been without transport to school since the start of the school year despite the fact that they had secured places on school transport. Also a number of buses on approved routes have not been able to run due to a lack of bus escorts, particularly buses to Newcourt Special School.

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore last week expressed frustration with the Minister for Education Norma Foley regarding the failure to provide much-needed school transport for Wicklow families.

said: "Families in Wicklow who have paid for access to the school bus scheme for the 2023/2024 school year are still waiting for those services six months after they were due to commence. It is totally unacceptable for these students to have

been abandoned by the school transport system like this.

"The B9212 was meant to service Wicklow PPC and carry up to 53 students. This has not run once. Five students with additional needs who require taxis to get



Ruby and Erin Halpin with their grandmothers Laura Halpin and Irene Doole who travelled from Scotland to be with her special girls for Grandparents Day at St. Laurence O'Toole's National School, Roundwood. Pic: Michael Kelly

them to school have also not been facilitated.

"I had also been advised that the service to Marino Special School would resume, but I am now told that this has not yet progressed. The only alternative solution for parents is to use Bus Eireann's public service obligation route from Ashford to Wicklow, which is inadequate.

"The process for applying for school bus tickets for the 2024/2025 school year is due to being in a matter of weeks, and we still have students with tickets for this year who are being ferried to school by their parents because the school bus for this year has not yet commenced.

"I have been asking the Minister for Education to outline what additional measures she will be

putting in place to avoid a repeat of this issue next year and I cannot get a straight answer. The Minister seems to have taken a hands-off approach to this scheme and if that continues we will not see the improvements that parents and students need to see delivered.

"The reality is that year in, year out, the Department of Education have proven they are not fit to manage this service. Three years ago, the Minister for Education requested a review of the scheme, and since then, nothing has changed. There are still not enough buses for ticket holders, and families are left in the lurch. It is totally unacceptable."

Sinn Féin TD John Brady also called on Minister Foley to intervene directly to resolve

the issue on school transport route B9212. "The situation where absolutely unacceptable. these poor children find themselves is

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Grandparents Barry and Yvonne Steele with Doireann Kelly at Grandparents Day at St. Laurence O'Toole's National School in Roundwood.

The Old Dublin Society

Dr. Mary Muldowney will present 'Prostitution in Dublin in the first decades of the twentieth century' at 6 p.m. on Wednesday February 14th to the Old Dublin Society in the Conference Room, Dublin City Library & Archive, 139-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2. All are welcome - admission is free and no booking is required.

Rathmichael Historical Society meeting

Colman O Clabaigh will present 'Sanctuary in Medieval Ireland' at 8 p.m. on Wednesday February 7th in St. Anne's National School, Stonebridge Road, Shankill, Co. Dublin. All are welcome - admission is €5 for non-members.

Fun quiz in Greystones

All are welcome to attend a fun quiz night in Greystones Golf Club on February 22nd at 7:30pm. There will be Many prizes up for grabs. Table of four - €40 a table. Promises to be an enjoyable, social evening. The event is being organised by the Irish-German Society of County Wicklow.

GARA coffee morning

The next Greystones Active Retirement Association Coffee Morning will be held on 23rd February. Philip Byrne, seanachai from the YARN Storytelling Festival, will raise the roof with his stories. Full details on GARA Greystones and its activities and trips from 087 2845465 or garagreystonesplus@gmail.com.

Support meeting for bereaved parents

For many, the new year can bring mixed emotions, especially for those bereaved. To date in 2024, Aman Cara, the organisation supporting bereaved parents nationwide, has noted an increase to those attending their monthly meetings.

On Tuesday 13th February, Anam Cara will hold their monthly South East meeting in The Brandon House Hotel, New Ross at 7:15pm. They want to reach out any bereaved parent, regardless of the age of the child or circumstances of death, to attend the meeting. Registration is not required, just arrive on the evening. Anam Cara would welcome any bereaved parent in the South East area to attend. Anam Cara can be contacted on 085 2888888 or by email info@anamcara.ie

Lambing season

As the lambing season approaches in the picturesque Wicklow & Dublin uplands, the Wicklow Uplands Council is making a heartfelt plea to both recreational users of the uplands and local dog owners to prioritise the safety of pregnant sheep and new born lambs.

The council emphasises the importance of leaving dogs at home and ensuring that local dogs are not left to roam freely, as this can lead to distressing situations and even fatalities among the vulnerable sheep population.

Laragh Walking group

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

Wicklow businesses attend local enterprise showcase

Businesses from Wicklow had the opportunity to meet buyers from all over the world recently as part of the Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2024 at the RDS in Dublin.

There were over 100 Local Enterprise Office supported businesses from across the country present at the event with four in attendance in this Area from Co. Wicklow. These four businesses were: Kelly Hood, textile artist, Kilcoole; Culú Jewellery, Louise O'Hara, Bray; Aidan White, Living Earth Photography, Wicklow Town and Be Kind Industries, hand rolled incense, Kilcoole.

Over 4,000 buyers from retailers across the globe attended the three-day event in Dublin looking to secure new sales and partners for the year

ahead. Upwards of €25 million in business was expected to have been transacted across the three-day event.

Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Rural and Community Development, officially opened Showcase at the RDS, Dublin, highlighting how important trade shows such as Showcase are to the design and crafts sector.

Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Rural and Community Development, officially opened Showcase at the

RDS, Dublin and said: "I'm delighted to be here at Showcase 2024, to see some of the incredible products on display from our craft and design sector. I'm also thrilled to welcome such a diverse group of buyers from all across the world. Ireland is globally renowned for its craft and design and Showcase truly is the international launchpad for so many Irish makers to achieve this recognition. Most craftspeople live and work in rural areas outside our capital city of Dublin. My department is working hard to ensure that we continue to

support the rural development of these areas and encourage the growth of this sector for many years to come. Craft plays an integral part in Ireland's economy, and I wish everyone the best of luck over the next couple of days."

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Wicklow has been working closely with the Wicklow businesses in recent months to ensure they are in the best possible position to maximise their appearance at the event including sales technique, marketing materials and stand production.

'Rough Justice: crime and punishment in 19th century Wicklow'

A talk by historian James Scannell

From latter half of the eighteenth century until the passage of the Act of Union in 1800, over 220 crimes were punishable by death as the Irish Parliament in Dublin enacted increasing draconian legislation in a bid to deter criminal activities.

While this was reduced to ten by 1820, sentencing remained severe.

Convicted persons who received a sentence of more than two years were generally sentenced to transportation overseas to the Caribbean islands or Australia.

Following from his successful 'Rough Justice' talks in Dublin last year, historian James Scannell will be using local case studies dating from the 1860s to demonstrate that, while rehabilitation of offenders evolved during the 1840s, this was very limited in its application.

His talk will show that sentencing of Wicklow offenders for minor offences remained, in many cases, out of proportion to the nature of the offence.

It promises to be a very informative and interesting evening. The talk will take place in Wicklow Town library on **Thursday 15th February at 7pm**. Attendance is free but booking is required as the venue has a limited capacity.

Book by e-mail to Wicklowlocalstudies@wicklowcoco.ie or call Wicklow Library 0404 67025.



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Wicklow IFA protest in Arklow

Farmers from around Co. Wicklow gathered in Arklow last Thursday evening to protest in solidarity with their EU counterparts. The event was part of a nationwide protest, with each county holding a tractor run or flyover. Wicklow IFA gathered at the dog track in Arklow before driving up through the town to finish at the north exit.



Pictured at the IFA protest in Arklow were Cllr Sylvester Bourke, IFA Arklow Chairperson Paul Kinch and Fine Gael candidate Laurie Kearon

The demonstration was marked by the presence of the Paul Kinch, the IFA's Arklow Chairperson, who voiced the mounting frustration of farmers regarding the impact of EU policies on their livelihoods. Irish farmers are feeling increasingly burdened by regulations imposed by Brussels bureaucrats and Department of Agriculture officials, often perceived as being far removed from the practical realities of day-to-day farming.

Fine Gael's candidate for South Wicklow Laurie Kearon stood in solidarity with the local farmers and expressed her full support for their cause.

"I stand here with our farmers, who are the backbone of our community and essential to our economy," she said. "Their concerns regarding EU policies are valid, and I am committed to advocating for their interests and working towards a more equitable and sustainable future for farming in South Wicklow."

Mrs Kearon continued: "Farmers in Co Wicklow and across Ireland have closely observed the protests taking place throughout Europe.

"Their frustration mirrors that of their counterparts in other countries, as they believe that excessive regulations imposed by Brussels bureaucrats and Department of Agriculture officials are threatening to undermine their businesses. These regulators are often seen as being disconnected from the practical challenges faced in day-to-day farming. While Irish farmers maintain a pro-EU stance, there is a growing sense of dissatisfaction regarding the influence of EU policies on European farmers and how these policies are applied in Ireland. Across the European farming community, there is a shared sentiment that they have reached a breaking point, and change is needed."

IFA President Francie Gorman said that the general feeling amongst farmers across the EU is that 'enough is enough'.



Terry Toner and Aimee Bachari at the 'Pause for Peace' march in Arklow on 28th January. The family event saw parents, grandparents and children of all ages come together for the people of Gaza.

PROBLEMS WITH SCHOOL BUSES

Continued from page 1

"There are 53 children who the Department of Education has effectively abandoned by the side of the road. The situation is not only inconvenient and frustrating for families it is impacting directly on the education of the children in question.

"They had secured places on school transport, yet since the start of the school year have not been provided with a place on school transport, despite the fact that the service had previously been available. The advice to the children and their families

lies from the Department has been to try and use Bus Eireann's public service transport.

"Although they are quick to add that there will be no amendment to timetables or attempt to increase capacity on the local route despite the fact that these 53 pupils have no other way to make it to school. What we have witnessed here is a complete abdication of responsibility by the Department of Education. And I call upon Minister Norma Foley to intervene directly to ensure that school transport is provided once more for the 53 children in question."

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Also available at gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-public-expenditure-and-reform/



Celebrating St Brigid and local community caregivers

'There's room for everyone under Brigid's cloak'

It's only the second year that we have started officially celebrating Brigid's Day in Ireland and throughout the country numerous artistic and community-centric events are taking place. Saint Brigid stands as a reminder of our deep humanity, a call to remember inclusiveness and harmony.

She extends a bridge between the old stories and myths celebrating the powerful, compassionate nature of women and the more pragmatic, recent vision of an Ireland of Equals - as one of the first countries to promote universal suffrage to women and men alike, with the Proclamation of the Irish Republic in 1916.

That is why we are taking this moment to celebrate our contemporary heroes, women of all ages and backgrounds who make our community in County Wicklow an inclusive space for everyone, no matter the age, gender, economic status or ethnic background. The caring, protective, nurturing energy can be seen in society as a fundamentally feminine trait - not in the sense that it is solely reserved to women, but that it is more socially accessible to them. That is why we will see, statistically, more

women in community-centric roles, such as teaching, caring or social services. That is also in the case for our Citizen Information Centres in Bray and Arklow, where many of our staff and volunteers are female.

When caring becomes a vocation

We briefly chatted to some of the Bray Citizen Information Centre workers to understand how their vocation, built on empowering and caring for others, brings them satisfaction, despite the challenges and difficulties it can also possess:

Julie - Information Officer, staff - originally from Clare, based in Bray

It is a privilege to work in an environment where I can use my natural caring abilities to help and sup-

port others, in particular the more vulnerable members of our community. While I use my knowledge and skills to assist clients, I also learn something from each of them, which in turn helps me to be better at my role. This makes the whole process seem very holistic. I get immense fulfillment from providing support in this way, which could never be achieved in a different industry, and I feel very grateful.

Martina - Development Manager, South Leinster Citizen Information Service - originally from Kerry, based in Bray

My inspiration for working in the community sector is that my values align to the culture of Citizens Information where we provide an emphatic, non-judgmental and caring information service for all of our clients whom we

treat with courtesy, dignity and respect.

Claire - Director on the Board of South Leinster CIS & volunteer Information Provider - originally from Dublin, based in Bray

I volunteer as an information provider as well as a director on the Board of the Citizens Information Service so I can appreciate how we focus on caring for the customer at every level. My motivation is the positive feedback I receive and knowing that we provide real help to our clients.

Raluca - volunteer PR Coordinator, originally from Bucharest, based in Dublin

I have always been motivated to use my communications management know-how to help organisations that help commu-



Volunteer Information Assistants: Miriam Johnston, Ann Mooney, Triona Irving, Information Provider - Julie Stringer. Pic: Raluca Turcanasu

nities and individuals have a wider outreach. Working with Bray CIC gives me a sense of belonging in Ireland and allows me to gain a better understanding of social services here.

We did want to know what it's like for men to work in a mainly female environment, so we asked Ben, who volunteers for Bray CIC what

his take is:

I've always worked in information services of one kind or another where women usually outnumber men. So, that kind of work environment is very familiar to me. Yet, it's probably fair to say that the more diverse a workforce you can achieve, the more rounded your service is likely to be. I enjoy what I do because it

involves helping people assert their civic rights and fulfill their civic responsibilities in a very practical way - something which is essential to sustain our sense of community in fast-changing times.

Exercising civil and social rights bring about responsibilities and it is vital that we all contribute as much as we can to

empower our communities and transform them into welcoming, inclusive, non-judgmental spaces. Volunteering with organisations in any field is a great way to give back, to meet like-minded people of all ages and backgrounds and, at the end of the day, to feel that satisfaction of having contributed to making the world a little bit better.

Arklow and Wicklow in top 10 best towns for work-life balance

New research by Switcher.ie has revealed the best Irish towns and cities for work-life balance. The study is based on data like access to local amenities like primary schools, major supermarkets and leisure centres, services like broadband speed and mobile coverage, proximity to green spaces and transport routes, plus house prices and crime rates.

According to the research, Arklow is the fifth best place for the perfect work-life balance, while Wicklow town is the sixth best place for work-life balance. Arklow is also the fourth

best town for shopping and eating, with Wicklow ranking as fifth best.

New legislation which gives employees the right to request remote work carer's leave and other flexible arrangements is expected by the end of the year. With 32% working from home at least one day a week during 2022, Ireland's towns and local economies could also enjoy the benefits of an increasingly flexible workforce.

Castlebar claimed the

top spot as the best place to strike the perfect work-life balance in Ireland. Not only are house prices lower than others on our list, but it offers a winning mix of excellent local amenities, good connectivity for hybrid working and plenty of green spaces.

Longford was the most affordable town to buy a house in our study. House prices were based on the average house price in October 2023 (Residential Property Price Index). Top 5 affordable towns to live & work: Longford, Ballina, Cavan, Letterkenny and Sligo.

Arklow

- *Average house price: €289,460
- *Major supermarkets per 1000: 0.30
- *Leisure centres per 1000: 0.30
- *Primary schools per 1000: 0.60
- *National & public parks per 1000: 0.37
- *Crime rate per 1000: 41.2
- *Average broadband speed: 192 Mbps
- *Average distance to major routes: 6.80 Km

Wicklow

- *Average house price: €425,771
- *Major supermarkets per 1000: 0.31
- *Leisure centres per 1000: 0.31
- *Primary schools per 1000: 0.85
- *National & public parks per 1000: 0.31
- *Crime rate per 1000: 36.66
- *Average broadband speed: 177 Mbps
- *Average distance to major routes: 6.80 km

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Imelda O'Connor and Stephen O'Connell with Maci Hamilton at Grandparents Day in St Laurence O'Toole's National School in Roundwood.

'Govt's chaotic immigration policy in a state of disarray'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore and Sinn Féin TD John Brady have strongly criticised the Government's approach to immigration.

Deputy Whitmore said: "In recent days and weeks, we have seen U-turn after U-turn by the Government in its efforts to house migrants seeking asylum. We are now presented with a completely illogical situation where the State is putting asylum seekers into a hotel while proposing to buy an empty hotel in the same town. This pathetic attempt to quell local opposition makes absolutely no sense and clearly illustrates that the Government has no proper policy or plan in place.

"Such a ham-fisted approach undermines the Government's own immigration policy and will make it even more difficult to find suitable accommodation for Ukrainians or asylum seekers in towns across the country.

"Failure to plan has resulted in a policy that has put 600 vulnerable men out on the streets in sub-zero conditions and represents a complete abdication of responsibility by the Government.

"It is nearly two years since Russia invaded Ukraine, yet everything is still being dealt with on an emergency basis. A recommendation to build six State-run reception centres was made by an expert group in November 2022 but is only being examined by the Government now.

"The challenge is far too great for one minister and his department to manage. What we need is a cross-departmental taskforce, run from the Taoiseach's office, to coordinate this.

"There must also be a template for integration rolled out in communities in advance of migrants being housed, to link in with local services that provide training, education and language skills.

"A workable long-term policy on immigration will require a whole of Government response. Crucially, politicians must refrain from using their platforms to create division or stoke up fear."

Speaking in The Dail last week, Deputy Brady said: "The erosion of State services over many decades has pushed communities right to breaking point. It is a situation compounded by the failure of the Government to engage directly with communities over new arrivals; communities that are not equipped to deal with the added numbers within them. Instead, the communities are getting contradictory information and news from the Government and local government about the reality that is happening on the ground, with the promises of additional resources and services failing time and time again to materialise. New figures show that some 950 refugees are sleeping rough on our streets, while communities across the State are at breaking point. This is simply down to the failure of Government to develop a coherent plan.

"We know that at this point, there are approximately 103,000 Ukrainians within the State. However, we believe it is incumbent on the Government to signal now to those Ukrainians in Ireland and to the EU that when the temporary protection directive expires in March of next year at the latest, Ukrainians will be subject to the State's immi-

gration laws. Ukrainians who wish to remain in Ireland past that expiration date should be allowed to start applying now for critical skills permits, for example. If their home part of Ukraine still remains unsafe at that time, they should be allowed to apply for international protection within our system. However, that requires additional resourcing to cope with the additional numbers who will be availing of it at that point. What we need is information. What we need from the Government now is to give clarity.

"Ireland was quick to enthusiastically express its willingness to accept large numbers of refugees, which was the right thing to do. At the time, I recall figures of up to 200,000 being talked about and despite the fact that these figures were being freely thrown about by Minister after Minister in the Government, the lack of planning and foresight by the Government has been absolutely shocking. There is absolutely no plan whatsoever. We have now reached a point where in budget 2024, 26% of the budget of the Minister, Deputy O'Gorman's, Department will go towards temporary and international protection spending, that is, 20% towards Ukrainian supports and 6% towards international protection accommodation services. It is estimated that this year, there will be somewhere in the region of between 12,000 and 15,000 international protection applicants.

"The single biggest failure of this Government on the whole issue of immigration has been its failure to hold fear in check. Fear is being allowed to travel unchecked and untrammelled across the State. This is down to a singular failure by the Government to communicate clearly with communities. Within the information vacuum that has been left by the Government, far-right agitators have been allowed to hold court.

"They have used the moment to foment fear. International applicants have been assaulted on our streets. Accommodation centres have been burned to the ground. Members of this House have been accosted on the street outside our national Parliament. The streets of our city centre were burned in uncontrolled riots. The lack of prosecutions continues to embolden these criminals. The Government's communication strategy is a shambles.

"At the outset of the Russian invasion, it made sense to award medical cards automatically to those seeking safety here, deferring the means test to a later date. However, the HSE was issued policy instructions in 2023 to continue to award the medical card automatically for a full 12 months to Ukrainians who continued to arrive. This was despite the absence of operational capacity barriers to conducting an earlier means test and despite the provision in Irish law that entitlements should be on the same basis as Irish citizens. Sinn Féin proposes reducing the preferential treatment in the award of medical cards by conducting medical card means tests earlier for all."

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly spoke in The Dail last

week about the response of the Health Service: "The Department of Health and the HSE have been at the forefront in the provision of services for all eligible arrivals. The HSE has developed a refugee and migrant health model to provide a flexible local healthcare response to address the unmet needs of the almost 132,000 new arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. This approach can respond to areas of higher demand, different types of accommodation provision and local health service factors.

"The Government is providing €50 million in 2024 to develop the HSE refugee and migrant health model, which includes the provision of medical cards for eligible arrivals. The health model is delivered through the HSE primary care and social inclusion service, which is a fully integrated part of the community-based healthcare service.

"In addition, the HSE continues to develop and expand public health and primary care services, including the delivery of new primary care centres and enhanced community care services for the entire population. It is worth pointing out that those arriving here seeking assistance and fleeing war in Ukraine are predominantly women and children. Only a small proportion are presenting with significant health needs. A full medical card is provided for Ukrainian refugees and people who register as international protection applicants.

Special GP clinics are being provided to respond to capacity challenges resulting from significant increases in demand for services, particularly in areas where access to primary and community care services may be more challenging.

"The Department of Health and the HSE are in the process of identifying additional supports that may be required for communities in which there has been a significant number of people arriving - Ukrainians fleeing war and those seeking international protection.

"Regardless of international arrivals, I am acutely aware that there are communities that need better access to health services, be it home care, GP, community or hospital-based services. In response to this general need, the Government is involved in the biggest expansion of our healthcare services in a very long time. It includes a national programme of primary care centres, an entire new community-based healthcare service, more than 1,100 new hospital beds, more than 26,000 more healthcare professionals and a lot more. We are responding to specific local pressures. For example, the Minister, Deputy Foley, and I are working on a plan to bring more GPs to the Iveragh Peninsula, where the number of GPs has fallen from six to three and will soon fall to two. We have specific bespoke services for those arriving in the country. We are in the middle of a massive expansion of our healthcare services to address demand and we are also responding to specific issues, which have been raised."



Cassie Conaghan and Chef Aine Donegan at the Arkloe RNLI Hurry to the Curry event for the Arklow RNLI, in the Arklow Bay Hotel.



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checktheregister.ie

An Coimisiún Toghcháin
The Electoral Commission



Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore and Cllr Mark Barry at Greystones Garda Station.

No timeline for refurbishment of Greystones Garda Station

With no definite timeline for the completion of works at Greystones Garda station, Deputy Jennifer Whitmore, Social Democrats TD for Wicklow has raised some concerns. In answer to a parliamentary question submitted by the Wicklow TD the Department of Public Expenditure could not provide detailed timelines on the completion of the project.

Deputy Whitmore said: "I was very disappointed with the answer I received from Minister O'Donovan to my question on this matter. The state of repair of Greystones Garda Station has been an issue since 2006. For years now we have been told that funding has been allocated, but that funding never materialised. And while the commencement of works is to be welcomed, starting with the repair of the stone wall and the carpark, we need a firm commitment for the internal works at the Garda Station, not only the commencement and completion date but the plan of works intended."

Social Democrats Local Councillor, Mark Barry added: "Greystones Garda station has been wholly unsuitable as a public building for some time now with access issues to the building as well as a complete lack of suitable facilities for staff and Gardaí who work there. It is important that the remedial works that are planned for the building are outlined in detail so that we have clear oversight of the renovations planned and a concise picture of an expected completion date."

Deputy Whitmore continued: "Making the station accessible to wheelchair users should be the first priority, as well as improving the internal environment so that the public, staff and members of the force alike can access a facility that is fit for purpose. When I raised this issue with Minister McEntee last year, these were the issues that I highlighted as a priority and I will be calling on the Minister to outline the nature of the works intended, as well as a very clear timeline for completion. This important investment in Greystones Garda Station cannot be let fall by the wayside as it has done since 2006."

Timmins writes to Minister regarding Kiltegan broadband issues

National Broadband Ireland (NBI) excluding rural village

Cathaoirleach of the Baltinglass Municipal District, Councillor Edward Timmins has written to Minister of State with responsibility for Communications and the Circular Economy, Ossian Smyth TD to seek urgent clarification as to why NBI appear to be excluding the West Wicklow village from proper broadband access as it appears Eircom are allegedly overstating existing broadband speeds.

Councillor Timmins is urging the Minister to ensure Kiltegan is included in the National Broadband Plan and wishes to highlight the transformative impact of high speed broadband for the more rural areas of the county particularly with regard to remote working. Speaking from Kiltegan on Tuesday 30th January, Councillor Timmins stated: "While it's very welcome large areas of West Wicklow are currently having broadband installed, and it's some-

thing I have positively highlighted on social media, it would appear that NBI are excluding the Kiltegan community because Eircom are allegedly stating the area has 50mbps broadband speeds. "I've been reliably informed by local residents, who I have spoken to at length in recent days, that broadband speeds are never more than 30mbps. This issue can easily be investigated through speed tests in the area to ascertain average speeds. NBI must include Kiltegan

in the broader plan. The National Broadband Plan stipulates that broadband with speeds of at least 30Mbps should be available nationwide. Clarification must be given from the Minister regarding the position of Eircom with regard to Kiltegan." Regarding the impact of broadband limitations in rural areas, Councillor Timmins pointed out: "Remote working is particularly important for residents in more rural areas of West Wicklow who

have limited public transport options so it's essential all communities have access to high-speed broadband. It is a pillar of our current County Development Plan so it's crucial rural communities aren't put at any disadvantage when it comes to working from home. "Remote working plays a key role in improved quality of life. The 2022 National Remote Working Survey published by the Western Development Commission and NUI Galway highlighted how 52% were working in a hybrid model, 40% fully remotely, and only 8% were fully on-site with 90% of respondents agreeing it's essential employers offer this option. "Furthermore, the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) report

'Evaluation of the Impacts of Remote Working' indicated that remote working would have a positive impact on the economy and society, and listed environmental benefits of saving 164,407 tonnes of CO2 a year, with an equivalent monetary saving of €7.6m." Councillor Timmins concluded: "Several organisations including Social Justice Ireland have observed the potential that remote working has to transform rural areas in terms of employment flexibility, but only if proper broadband is in place. This issue must be resolved for Kiltegan who should be included in the National Broadband Plan so the full benefits of remote working can be felt by all and others such as students and anyone who wishes to access the internet."



Cllr Edward Timmins

Bray Harbour Improvement Project makes significant advancement

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has confirmed that it has received a Preliminary Business Case for the Bray Harbour proposal from Wicklow County Council.

The project is set to cost an estimated €9.5m to deliver, the Department has preliminary allocated over €7m to assist in the delivery of the project with the balance to be

bridged by Wicklow County Council. Commenting on the news, Social Democrats

Local Election candidate Aaron McAllorum said: "This is a welcome step, it is still at a very early stage but it is progress none the less. "I have sought an update in relation from the Department on the business case and when it a decision gate determination will be made on it. "If the redevelopment proceeds, I hope it will provide for an uplift for all in the surrounds and hopefully attract some tourism to the area. "As part of the reimagining of the Harbour, it is hoped that amenity and public realm works, a boardwalk linking the promenade with the harbour, a cycle bridge, and a feasibility study to examine options to enhance the amenities of the existing harbour, such as a harbour wall extension. "The harbour area can have the potential to link two ends of Bray in a really tangible way".

A key measure in the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). The programme is aimed towards providing transformational capital projects that are hoped will contribute to the regeneration and rejuvenation of cities and large towns.



Aaron McAllorum at Bray Harbour



Bray Harbour

Frustration with plans for rail disruption for 2024

Rail users aggravated on bank holiday again

Rail-users to and from Bray/Greystones have yet again had to endure bank holiday interruptions to services this week due to line improvement works.

Irish Rail revealed their plans that at least three weekends in the first quarter of 2024 will see no services for the North Wicklow towns.

Reacting to the announcement, Deputy Jennifer Whitmore said: "I appreciate vital infrastructural works need to be undertaken to maintain the integrity of the line however, throughout 2023 and again this year, Greystones is being denied an essential public transport mode.

"The DART is the real alternative to the private vehicle for people in Charlesland, Delgany and Greystones to get in and out of Dublin and it seems like every time there's a long weekend on the calendar the line closes."

Also Commenting on the plans, Social Democrats Local Election candidate in Bray, Aaron McAllorum said: "Irish Rail must provide additional solutions, a free shuttle to meet the LUAS line for

instance. Bank holidays are opportune times to visit Bray by train, the link in from Dublin is synonymous with stunning coastal views and fun family days out.

"Irish Rail has signalled that they don't consider St. Patrick's Weekend for works due the importance of tourism - Bray gets its fair share of domestic and international tourists, and the town and its business community doesn't seem to be part of this consideration.



Tilly Kavanagh with her grandparents Terry and Tina at Grandparents Day at St. Laurence O'Toole's National School in Roundwood.

'We cannot have a repeat of outrageous spending on St Patrick's Day junkets'



Ciaran Hogan, Aontu

Following an announcement that all 15 Cabinet ministers, the Attorney General, all 20 junior ministers, are heading overseas for Saint Patrick's Day, Aontu has raised concerns over last year's costs.

Party leader Peadar Kirby said: "Minister Coveney's St. Patrick's Day trip to Australia last year and his associated delegation incurred a taxpayer cost nearing €40,000 in expenses tied to flights and accommodation. There is a question here over

the tangible benefits

Ireland stands to derive from these excursions. Are our ministers actively championing human rights or participating in impactful trade negotiations during these international trips? Aontu believes that Ministers should outline what they hope to achieve, before they go, and report on their

achievements after so that citizens here can scrutinise for themselves the cost benefit of these trips."

Deputy Toibin continued: "We also need to consider the carbon footprint associated with these junkets. Eamon Ryan will have plenty of time for sleep on his long flight to Brazil, but I hope he will also reflect on the terrible impact of the Mercosur trade agreement, not just on the Irish beef market, but on the environ-

ment. Beef production in Brazil involves forest fires, overgrazing and deforestation at a savage scale, not to mention the carbon cost associated with transporting the finished product to Europe.

"I sincerely hope that the Green Party Senator Pippa Hackett will explain to the peat producers in Latvia, the reasoning why the government are importing thousands of tonnes of peat from them while at the same time

they are seeking to ban peat or turf production at home here. On a practical level it isn't good to have the entire cabinet out of the country at any given time. The health and housing crises will continue in the government's absence, and we need a designated survivor working here at home this year," concluded Toibin.

Local Aontu representative, and election candidate in Bray Ciaran Hogan added: "Unfortunately the

career politicians in lenister house are spending taxpayer money, your money on pleasure trips. They can't offer us any targets or achievements from these unjustifiable trips away. For the past few years the same government heads were telling us to avoid unnecessary journeys and to work from home, maybe they could do the same thing on a zoom call? Or maybe after all these years St.Patrick is still banishing the snakes from this island."

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Entry now open for SSE Renewables Round Ireland 2024

Wicklow Sailing Club has officially confirmed that entry for the next edition of the SSE Renewables Round Ireland Race is now open. The 704-nautical mile-race, which has been described as the Kilimanjaro of Sailing will commence on Saturday, 22nd June 2024.

SSE Renewables, leading renewable energy developer, owner and operator continues to provide its support as the title event sponsor for the 2024 event. The race will offer both competition and personal achievement for boat owners and crews alike.

Since the success of the 2022 event, significant interest has grown in the race with a promising level of pre-entry enquiries already submitted to the race organisers.

Berthing facilities at the pier and quays close to Wicklow Sailing Club's base will be available, in addition to marina options at Greystones and Dun Laoghaire for big boat entries.

The course for the classic biennial offshore event follows the traditional route first contested in 1980 that states - 'leave



Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Commodore of Wicklow Sailing Club Karen Kissane, Head of Offshore Ireland at SSE Renewables Barry Kilcline and Kyran O'Grady of Wicklow Sailing Club.

Ireland and its islands to starboard - while starting and finishing at the scenic port of Wicklow on the East Coast of Ireland'.

Kyran O'Grady, Round Ireland 2024 race organiser, Wicklow Sailing Club said: "The race event in 2022 was very successful, with close to 50 vessels entering.

"This year, we are looking forward to an even larger turnout. With less

than six months to go before the 2024 race, we look forward to welcoming an array of both national and international competitors across the various classes seeking to complete in one of the bucket-list events in the sailing calendar."

The partnership with Wicklow Sailing Club continues as the company works to develop Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 off the

coast of Arklow, Co. Wicklow, which will seek its third and final planning consent from An Bord Pleanála later this year.

Barry Kilcline, Head of Offshore (Ireland) at SSE Renewables said: "We are delighted to partner again with Wicklow Sailing Club to deliver an eagerly anticipated event, which we hope will offer the domestic and international sailing community an

exciting competition and something to look forward to in June. This event reflects the potential that the Irish maritime space offers, and we look forward to seeing competitors sail past our proposed development site at Arklow Bank in Wicklow."

Entries will be accepted from 29 January to 31 May 2024. See roundireland.ie/wpl/ for updates.



Director of Services at Wicklow County Council Michael Nicholson, Senator Pat Casey, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Commodore of Wicklow Sailing Club Karen Kissane, Head of Offshore Ireland at SSE Renewables Barry Kilcline, Director of Services at Wicklow County Council Lorraine Gallagher, Kyran O'Grady of Wicklow Sailing Club and Head of Finance at Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson.

Echelon expands sponsorship deal with Arklow RFC

Arklow RFC has announced the expansion of the club's sponsorship agreement with Echelon Data Centres. For season 2023-2024, Echelon will continue to support the men's senior rugby team and will now also provide backing for the Arklow RFC Academy programme.

The increased level of support from Echelon means that Arklow RFC will be able to provide additional skills and strength & conditioning coaching to youth players in the Academy. This will help them reach their full rugby potential and prepare them for senior rugby in the coming years.

The new sponsorship agreement comes one year after Irish-owned company Echelon, which has two data centre sites in development in Wicklow, came on board as a sponsor of Arklow RFC.

As part of the deal, Echelon will be the main sponsor on the jersey worn by the Arklow men's teams. The sponsorship funding will also help provide resources for the club's players, including training equipment and playing kit, and support efforts to encourage more youngsters to take up rugby.

Welcoming the partnership Ian Gavigan, Chairman of Arklow RFC, said: "Arklow RFC has more men, women, and children playing rugby than ever before - and we're determined to continue growing the game in south Wicklow. That takes investment and support, and the backing we receive from Echelon Data Centres makes all the difference to our ability to provide the infrastructure and resources to attract new players and ensure they remain involved in the sport into adulthood."



Kit Dunne of Wicklow Bat Sea Angling Club and Deirdre Keigh of SSE Renewables present Paddy Kenny with his award at the Wicklow Bay Sea Angling Club's Youth Coaching Programme Awards evening in Wicklow Town



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Whitmore calls for urgent update for Wicklow Bus Connects

Jennifer Whitmore TD has called for a detailed update on the progress of Bus Connects for towns across Wicklow, focusing on the delivery of plans for Bray and Greystones. The initial plans for new bus corridors and additional services were announced for Wicklow in 2018, yet nearly six years later, much progress has yet to be made.

Deputy Whitmore said: "I am very concerned that Wicklow has fallen off the radar for the National Transport Authority and Dublin Bus regarding Bus Connects. Since the initial publication and public consultation in 2018, there have only been a few meaningful updates provided, with the last one being in April 2022.

"I am calling on the Minister for Transport to

direct the NTA to provide a dedicated update for delivery of Bus Connects for Wicklow, focusing on our major commuter hubs such as Bray, Greystones, and Wicklow Town.

"I was still a councillor when this all began. Six years later, we are still waiting to see many plans delivered. Bray and Greystones were earmarked for ambitious plans such as; The E1

from Ballywaltrim through Bray Main Street, City Centre and Northwood in Dublin; The L14 around Bray taking in the Full Southern Cross Road, Putland Road, Meath Road, Strand Road, DART Station and out to Palermo; The L15 direct service between Bray and Enniskerry; The L12 feeder bus from the current Ballywaltrim/Southern Cross Terminus

to Bray DART; The L1 and L2 loop services to Greystones, Newcastle, Kilcoole, and Newtownmountkennedy; The X1 and X2 are to be continuations of morning peak services similar to the current 84x.

"We need an update on the progress of these routes and when people can expect them to be up and running. I am concerned that if people have been hearing about

Bus Connects for so long but haven't yet been able to take advantage of it, we are wearing down support for public transport use.

"It is also worth noting that in the last few years, we have seen a huge amount of development in towns like Bray and Greystones and population growth across the county. It is reasonable that these would have been developed with these proposals in mind. However, many of these estates are now complete while the bus services are still not in place.

"As of the last census, 58,715 people travelled to work across Wicklow. Most of these drove to work. Only 2,568 people were travelling by bus. We need to increase those numbers and see a clear roadmap for how we can deliver that.

"I have been in contact with Dublin Bus, the NTA and Bus Éireann regarding the provision of buses for Wicklow for years, and while there are always commitments to deliver in the next stage of the Bus Connects plan, it seems little progress is being



Jennifer Whitmore TD

made on the ground. I will continue to raise this issue for Bray and Greystones in the coming months."

Progress made on getting Cove lifeguards in place

At the January meeting of the Greystones Municipal District, an update was received about lifeguarding in Greystones. The Environmental Services Section of Wicklow County Council is looking at adding summer lifeguards to the Cove in Greystones in the future. Cllr Stephen Stokes, Cathaoirleach of the Greystones District commented that a positive discussion was held. However some logistical and staffing challenges remained.

Cllr Stephen Stokes stated: "Wicklow County Council is also seeking to make the Cove a designated bathing area. To achieve this, a prospective designated bathing area needs to have good quality water samples for three years in a row. We already have two years completed. Hopefully we are swimming in the right direction on this."

Should lifeguards be approved for the Cove an estimated €50,000 is projected to be spent in the first year. Cllr Stokes added: "The meeting heard that about €30,000 would be invested into staffing, with the remainder needed for a lifeguard hut and equipment."

Wicklow County Council also carried out a risk safety assessment of the Cove in March 2023. This recommended the addition of

a lifeguard service, with three lifeguards on a rotation basis. The risk assessment has also resulted in the buoys being increased from 2 to 4. Additional signage due to be installed soon.

During the meeting there was also discussion about staffing challenges. Lifeguarding requires certification which takes time to achieve. Additionally the meeting heard that lifeguarding pay rate is set nationally. Cllr Stephen Stokes noted: "Wicklow County Council is finding it challenging to recruit lifeguards for the upcoming season across County Wicklow. Most of the lifeguards are students, and some opt to go to the USA to lifeguard for the summer. It's an important community service and I would encourage more people to consider becoming a lifeguard."

The Greystones Municipal

District meeting also heard that Wicklow County Council has again applied for a blue flag for the South Beach. During the blue flag season dogs are not permitted in the blue flag section. Wicklow County Council has given a commitment that waste enforcement officers will monitor the South Beach. Cllr Stokes enquired whether the dog wardens could carry out some patrols. Cllr Stephen Stokes further added: "Greystones is like the dog capital of Ireland. The vast majority of dog owners are great. But after some recent dog attacks, I believe the community would welcome some additional patrols of along the seafront. I will continue to raise this, and improvements for dog facilities across Charlesland, Delgany, Greystones, Kilcoole, Killadreenan and Newcastle."



Cllr Stephen Stokes

Greystones delegation to visit Holyhead for St. David's Day

Greystones Municipal District Cathaoirleach Stephen Stokes and Kathleen Kelleher from the Holyhead Twinning Committee will travel to Holyhead for St. David's Day 2024. St. David is the Patron Saint of Wales. His Feast Day is 1st March.

There they will participate in the Annual Holyhead St. David's Day Parade. Additionally, they will make contact with their Twinning Partnership colleagues to make further twinning plans.

Virginia Crosbie MP, who represents Anglesey in the British Parliament will also be part of the celebrations.

St. David's Secondary School Greystones and Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern Anglesey are planning further events and school officials have met on several occasions.

The YUB School Choir travelled to Greystones in December and received a huge welcome for their

participation in the Three Schools Christmas Concert held in Temple Carrig School. The three

Greystones secondary schools involved were St. Davids, Temple Carrig and Greystones

Community College.

The RMS Leinster Memorial Committee from Dun Laoghaire will also be travelling over for St. David's Day. The Greystones and Dun Laoghaire contingents will meet up to jointly mark Wales National Day.

The RMS Leinster was an Irish ship operated by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company. She served as the Kingstown-Holyhead mailboat until she was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine on 10 October 1918. The Greystones/Holyhead Twinning Partnership is now in its twelfth year.



Holyhead's Red Dragon, Holyhead police and Holyhead children pictured at last year's St. David's Day Holyhead Parade



Mellissa Byrne, Denise Conroy and Yvonne Keogh at the Arklow RNLi Hurry to the Curry event in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

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Elaine Harding

Banking & Finance, HR, Insurance, Legal, Marketing, Multilingual, Office staff, Production & General Operatives, Sales and Warehouse staff."

Anna Thornton - DNG Thornton Properties

With over 15 years experience in the local property market, Anna Thornton is proud to be part of the DNG network.

Having worked with local agents previously, gaining a wealth of local knowledge and experience, 2021 saw Anna take the decision to open her own office.

"The pandemic made a lot of people reassess their priorities and goals, and I felt it a natural move to open my own business, and bring my personal approach to the local community. I was very fortunate to be able to join the DNG network and the support, throughout has been invaluable"

DNG Thornton Properties pride themselves on prioritising their clients' needs and experience, to ensure each sale is treated with exceptional local knowledge, professionalism, and enthusiasm to ensure the whole process for both vendors and purchasers is a positive one.

Not your typical estate agents, they aim to provide a more transparent and engaging service that includes a FREE monthly property clinic which runs the last Friday of each month in the office in Wicklow Town. The clinic attracts



Anna Thornton

the best of industry related experts from solicitors, architects, interior design and home staging, all offering their advice and expertise to those who pop along to the event. Keep an eye on their social media for upcoming guests.

Going from strength to strength, DNG Thornton Properties are now opening a second office in Arklow. The office will be open towards the end of February and is located at 50 Main Street, they look forward to welcoming you through their doors very shortly but in the meantime you can contact them on 0402 20512.

Whether you are thinking of buying or selling, DNG are on hand to offer advice and support so don't hesitate to call in to their offices.

Sinéad Connolly - Sin É

Sin É, the popular hair and beauty salon, has been serving the rapidly growing community of Charlesland for almost 20 years.

Sin É, the popular hair and beauty salon, has been serving the rapidly growing community of Charlesland for almost 20 years.

Specialising in organic hair colour, owner Sinéad Connolly and her talented team have loyal clients who travel from far and wide to the salon in Charlesland shopping centre.

"I opened the salon in Charlesland over 19 years ago. I still have clients coming to me from Blackrock where I started out. One of my very first clients still comes regularly from Castleknock with her daughter," Sinéad told the Wicklow Times.

With the help of her team and loyal customers, Sinéad successfully navigated her business through both the recession and the Covid



Sinéad Connolly

pandemic. Sin É has recently taken on two new senior stylists, Tara and Tanya, to meet the demand for its excellent range of hair grooming and colouring services.

"Among our new products, we are promoting a Qiqi Pro Hair Control straightening and de-frizz treatment which can last for up to six months. We also specialise in organic

hair colour from Denmark which covers 100% grey and lifts blonde highlights up to ten shades lighter and without the dryness or harsh chemicals," Sinéad says.

Sin É is located in a generous space in the shopping complex in Charlesland which has ample free parking. Open seven days a week (Sundays 11.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.) with special offers on Monday and Tuesday.

Sin É is now taking bookings for the confirmation and communion season. Sinéad says she is hugely grateful to her loyal customers and staff. "They are like family," she says.

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For more information check out: www.sine-hairandbeauty.com

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New scholarship programme to help tackle projected skills shortage in forestry sector

Coillte, the semi-state forestry company, has launched its first ever scholarship programme which will give two students the unique opportunity to pursue a full-time, third level programme within the area of forestry at either University College Dublin (UCD) or South East Technological University (SETU).

The scholarship will award two students up to €20,000 for the duration of the degree programme (€5,000 per year) to support with fees and living expenses.

The Coillte Scholarship programme aims to highlight forestry as a fulfilling career for both men and women and attract the foresters of the future into the sector. Forestry offers a broad spectrum of roles which focus on many areas including: sustainable wood production through tree planting and harvesting; promoting biodiversity conservation; implementing climate change adaptation strategies in Coillte's forests; as well as analysing environmental data to develop comprehensive plans for sustainable forest management.

Identified as a key enabler in the delivery of Ireland's climate action goals, the forestry industry will need more than 1,770 forestry and wood processing profession-

als to realise the ambitions of Ireland's Forest Strategy. Securing future talent is crucial to ensuring Coillte can realise many of these employment opportunities, focusing on delivering the company's own strategy, to enable the creation of new forests, increase the area of forests managed for biodiversity, continue to produce sustainably grown wood, and double the number of outdoor forest recreation spaces across the country.

Launching the Coillte Scholarship Programme, Mark Carlin, Managing Director of Coillte Forest said, "The forestry industry is projected to experience an acute labour shortage in the near future, which is a significant concern for Coillte and the wider forest sector and something we are working hard to address.

"Our strategic vision, which supports Ireland's Forest Strategy, highlights the importance of

forestry in tackling climate change but we need skilled workers to enable us to achieve Ireland's ambitions and those of Coillte. By launching the Coillte Scholarship Programme we are not only seeking to support young people opting for forestry as a career, we are also hoping to drive awareness of the multiple benefits of forestry as a whole and its suitability to many."

Developing a more gender diverse forest sector - Spotting forestry as a career choice, a recent RED C Research survey commissioned by Coillte, revealed that a total of 54% of young people aged between 18 and 29 are open to considering a career in the sector. While 61% of men surveyed believe their suitability to the forestry industry, a large proportion of women surveyed (45%) also consider themselves suitable, which is encouraging as Coillte aims to attract a more gender



Paul McGann (forester) with Mark Mahon (forester), Paul Geerdink (forestry graduate) and Stefania Purcaru (forester).

diverse talent pool.

Almost 6 in 10 of those surveyed recognise the strong correlation between forestry and sustainability and the role the sector plays in tackling climate change.

Forestry - championing sustainability - Among those who were favourable to a career in forestry, over half were attracted to supporting the environment and tackling climate change which they associate with working in the sector. A further half (53%) of survey respondents welcomed the opportunity to work in nature.

The research also highlighted

that those who had already expressed a love of nature and an understanding of the work of Coillte had a greater propensity to consider a career in forestry.

Carlin added, "The research findings are reassuring in terms of the suitability and consideration for a role in forestry by both men and women. In recent years, we've focused on diversifying our workforce to achieve greater gender balance and we're committed to increasing the representation of women studying and working in forestry in the years ahead. The interest indicated by both men and

women in tackling climate change and recognising the role forestry plays in that ambition is also encouraging.

Each scholarship recipient will also be offered the opportunity of paid summer employment in Coillte for the duration of the scholarship and on completion of the degree, they will have the opportunity to join Coillte. Applications for the Coillte Scholarship Programme can be completed online from 1st February at www.coillte.ie. The closing date for receipt of applications is 28th April.

24 new courses to upskill staff and future proof businesses

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD and Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Neale Richmond TD have launched micro-qualifications - a new further education offering to upskill staff and future-proof businesses.

The new micro-qualifications are short, stackable micro qualification programmes that are delivered locally by the network of 16 Education and Training Boards across the country and developed collaboratively

with industry.

The qualifications are aimed at employees with little or no cost to employers, and in areas such as sustainability, digital, robotics, aquaculture, business innovation and market development,

and are set to expand to meet demand.

All programmes are fully accredited and lead to a Level 4, 5 and 6 Special Purpose Awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Commenting on the launch, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris, said: "The provision of accessible and flexible upskilling opportunities that can meet the demands of both business and work is critical for both employees and employers.

"In our constantly changing world of work, these micro-qualifica-

tions mark a fundamental transformation in our response to the upskilling needs of enterprise, acknowledging the necessity for employees and employers to meet the demands of the modern workplace.

"This is especially timely as we continue to deliver on strong objectives in the European Year of Skills, a year where we are encourag-

ing individuals to avail of upskilling and reskilling opportunities. Targeted initiatives such as these micro-qualifications are delivering for employees and employers, both in supporting them to excel in their chosen fields, while also addressing Ireland's critical skills gaps."

Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail at the Department of Enter-

prise, Trade and Employment, Neale Richmond TD said: "Upskilling is central to our ever-changing work environment, allowing employees to stay competitive, boost their productivity and adapt to challenges such as digitalisation and climate change, while future-proofing our businesses. "Skills gaps are impacting many businesses and by providing

training in a range of areas, from robotics to sustainability and more to come, FET micro-qualifications will work to address these gaps for businesses while benefiting and upskilling workers. The result of strong collaboration between the FET sector and businesses, FET micro-qualifications will be transformative for businesses and employees across the country."

Harris announces major expansion of joint degree courses

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD has today announced a major expansion of degree courses outside the Central Application Office process.

The degrees start in a further education college and are completed in a university setting. Minister Harris said: "Tomorrow is the deadline to apply through the Central Application Office for a place in higher education institutions and we all know the stress and the pressure that places on young people.

"Today I have a very clear message to students filling out that form that there are other options and alternatives to the points race. Last year we launched the first degree courses outside the points system. Today we double the offering for students.

"These courses offer an alternative to the CAO system. They are aimed at ensuring the points do not determine your education choices or your career opportunities.

"Last year we started these programmes with a small number of courses and today we announce over 40 new courses starting in



Minister Simon Harris

2024. I hope this sends a clear message to young people considering options after school, you can be a nurse, engineer, work in ICT or construction without worrying about your points."

These courses include degrees in: Business; Nursing; Engineering; Construction; Music and

Sound Production; Software Development.

Applications are open from today for the first set of programmes, with further programmes to be added in the coming weeks.

Minister Harris added: "This is the second year of programmes. We continue to learn as we roll out this new delivery of third level education. Next year we will introduce a single portal outlining the array of opportunities for people of all ages seeking third level education."

The programmes are available in further education institutions all over the country, and in areas such as nursing, creative arts, engineering and ICT. Details on all courses open for application are available at www.nto.ie.

2025 programmes have been proposed by the University of Limerick, University of Galway, National College of Art and Design, Mary Immaculate College and University College Cork.



Mary Cunningham, who travelled from Newry to be with her grandson Senan Cunningham for Grandparents Day at St. Laurence O'Toole's National School in Roundwood.

Craft practitioners showcased at 'Made in Wicklow'



Minister Simon Harris with Eileen Jackson

Minister Simon Harris last week launched the 'Made in Wicklow' digital platform in Powerscourt Hotel. This project showcases 45 of Wicklow's craft practitioners and a five-day exhibition was opened across the bank holiday weekend in Powerscourt's Hallway Gallery.

This project showcases the skills, originality, and creativity of craft makers in County Wicklow and offers visitors a chance to immerse themselves in a visual exploration of the people and places behind local beautifully made craft pieces, all made with 'Head, Heart & Hands'.

Minister Harris said: "This is a fantastic project and exhibition. I was so proud to launch it this morning in Powerscourt, one of Ireland's national treasures. What this project showcases is the talent, creativity and skills of craft practitioners and people in County Wicklow.

"Last year I launched

the Wicklow Craft Strategy in Russborough House, another day where we showcased the beauty of Wicklow and the work of so many craft practitioners there too. We are so lucky in this beautiful County to have so many talented people and today we take that talent to the next level.

"Today we are harnessing the strategy launched last year and from that deliver some progress in the form of this fantastic project. This project puts on exhibition the work of 41 of our County's skilled craft practitioners and artisans to try and present a curated display of our county's unique, excellent and diverse craftsmanship.

"I am delighted that this project was funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development's LEADER Rural development programme with a €133,000 fund. Minister Harris concluded iOne of the really exciting aspects of this platform was the section on 'recommended buy', a section that highlights the importance of business and retail in our county supporting or craft industry.

Cllr Stephen Stokes, Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District, was also in attendance and praised all involved. Cllr Stokes stated: "We are fortunate to have so many talented and creative people in Co.



Anouk O'Connell, Hilary Jenkinson and Frederique van Buren



Bray Cathaoirleach Melanie Corrigan, Brian Carty, Liz Wall, Evelyn Murray, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Minister Simon Harris and Chaim Factor.

Wicklow. Our craft producers provide another great reason for people to shop local. Furthermore when people visit Wicklow, they will find that there are many great products to purchase and bring home. That is why it also essential for local stores to stock local too."

Cllr Stokes added: "We live in the Garden of Ireland. It is no surprise that there is such awesome creativity for our craft producers. There are beaches, rivers, lakes, mountains, forests and so much more to take inspiration from. The event was a great success. I would like to commend all of the organisers including Evelyn Murray and Brian Carty. Hopefully this will further boost our craft industry in County Wicklow."



Barbara and Aoife Sullivan

Public urged to support the annual Purple Heart Appeal

With over 215,000 cancer survivors living in Ireland today, Purple House Cancer Support is asking individuals, schools, shops, clubs and businesses to help to support families living with cancer, by holding a coffee morning, a Pancake Tuesday event, or by sending a special Purple House caring bear to someone on Valentines Day.



Eliana Gallagher and Alannah Traynor at the launch of the Purple Heart Appeal

The demand for Purple House's cancer services is rising daily, and in particular their child & family services. At the launch of the appeal were Alanna and Jack Traynor from Dublin.

Alanna said "Purple House has helped me greatly in dealing with my dad's cancer diagnosis. At first I was very lost and upset but since joining Purple House I grew to understand and accept it. They also helped me deal with my emotions regarding the situation as I didn't know what to do. It also helped that I made loads of new friends at their teen group. I love going to Purple House as everyone is so friendly and supportive it's all like one big family."

Jack had this to say for any young person affected by Cancer "Go to Purple House, it will help you to calm down, de-stress, and let go of all emotions."

Jack and Alanna's mum Stacey added "We started as patrons, we continued as family, without the support and kindness from all at Purple House we wouldn't have survived our cancer journey. The services our children received have made a nightmare situation livable and have helped us smile again. We ask you all to support Purple Heart Day as without charities like Purple House families would go through this darkness without the glimmer of rainbows that Purple House gives."

Anyone can get involved with the appeal by visiting purplehouse.ie or by contacting Purple House on 01-2866966 and by emailing info@purplehouse.ie to request a Purple Heart Appeal Pack.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

APPLICATIONS FOR POSTAL/SPECIAL VOTES

The Referendums on the 39th (Family Bill 2023) and 40th (Care Bill) Amendments to the Constitution on Friday 8th March 2024.

The following categories of Elector can apply for a Postal/Special Vote:

- Gardaí
- Defence Forces
- Disabled Postal Vote *
- Disabled Special Vote (Nursing Homes)
- Circumstance of Occupation/Students **
- Diplomats
- Anonymous ***
- Prisoners

* Disabled Postal Votes are available for electors still resident at home, who may on grounds of illness or disability be unable to travel to a Polling Station

** Circumstance of Occupation/Students are for electors who will be working on the day of the poll and for Students who are studying within the State and who would be unable to cast their vote at their normal polling station.

*** If the publication of your name and address would be prejudicial (harmful) to your personal safety or to that of a member of your household, you can apply to be an anonymous elector.

Postal Votes are **NOT** available for Electors who are out of the country on holidays on the day of the Poll.

ELECTORS WHO REQUIRE A POSTAL/SPECIAL VOTE – PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IS MONDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 5PM. LATE APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.

Please check www.checktheregister.ie to ensure that you have a vote on Friday 8th March 2024. If you have any queries please email franchise@wicklowcoco.ie



checktheregister.ie

An Coimisiún Toghcháin
The Electoral Commission

Volunteers plant new hedgerow along popular river walk

On Saturday 27th January, over 30 volunteers from ReWild Wicklow, Wicklow Tidy Towns and Wicklow Town Team planted a new native hedgerow along the popular Leitrim River walk in Wicklow Town.

All the trees were sponsored by local people who bought gift certificates from ReWild Wicklow last

Christmas and included a mix of hawthorn, alder, willow, rowan, blackthorn, hazel, crab apple, spindle and guelder rose.

"We hope they'll grow into a thick hedgerow that will provide food and shelter for the abundant birds and wildlife in this area but also help protect the riverbank and walk from erosion," said ReWild Wicklow chairperson and organiser of the project Danny Alvey.

"As well as bigger projects in the national park with the rangers and on nature reserves around the county, we want to bring rewilding into urban settings and show people what can be done with spaces of any size. With that in mind, we've been reaching out to Tidy

Town groups all across the county to provide native trees for hedgerows and other plantings.

"Thank you to Wicklow Tidy Towns and Wicklow Town Team for working with us on this idea and also to the local Wicklow Municipal District for facilitating and advising on the project. And of course to the over 30 volunteers who helped plant 150 trees on the day. We hope the trees will grow well in this already beautiful location and we look forward to checking them regularly."



Ian Alvey and Sebastien Pereton volunteering with ReWild Wicklow



Artur Majchrzak and Patryk Lewandowski planting trees at the Leitrim River



ReWild Wicklow volunteers planting 150 trees along the Leitrim River in Wicklow Town

Money for old bottles scheme coming to Greystones District

Everybody in County Wicklow will have a chance to get cash when they recycle old bottles and cans thanks to a new scheme introduced by the Green Party which began last week.



Cllr Lourda Scott taking part in a beach clean-up in Greystones

To use this scheme, you simply have to find one of the machines that have been installed in almost all supermarkets across the county. These so-called reverse vending machines not only collect your plastic bottles and cans but pay you to do so. This is the Deposit Return Scheme introduced by Green Minister Ossian Smyth and it is aimed at reducing litter and boosting recycling as part of the circular economy.

The scheme was warmly praised by Greystones Green Party Councillor Lourda Scott, who said "We need to replace our throwaway culture with a society that recycles and reuses material. On my monthly beach cleans with Clean Coasts North Wicklow, we regularly pick up discarded plastic bottles and cans. I hope that this scheme will help motivate people to hold onto these items and bring it to their nearest reverse vending machine."

"The reverse vending machines couldn't be easier to use. You just go to your local store and drop off your plastic bottles and cans. There's no sign up required, it's simple and convenient. Similar schemes have had great success in Europe, so now is our chance to get rubbish off our roads and into the reverse vending machines."

It is estimated that 1.9 billion plastic bottles and cans are bought every year in Ireland. Over 4,000 retailers have signed up to participate in the scheme and 3,500 reverse vending machines are being installed across the country.

The scheme is funded by a deposit of 15c on plastic bottles and cans of 500ml or less and 25c on containers larger than 500ml. This deposit is claimed by returning the containers to any participating store, even if they were bought in a different store. Consumers can choose between receiving the deposit as a store voucher or as cash.

Two thirds of Wicklow schools apply for free solar panels

Green TD Steven Matthews has welcomed the strong demand for the free school solar panel scheme in Wicklow that was launched in November 2023 and will enable schools across County Wicklow to make the transition towards renewable sources of energy.

This follows the confirmation that 69 out of 108 (64%) Wicklow schools have applied for funding under the first phase of the scheme with many more expected to sign up in the coming months. Welcoming the progress of this scheme, Deputy Matthews said: "I am delighted to see that so many schools across Wicklow have applied for funding to install free solar PV panels. Just under two thirds of eligible schools in Wicklow have already applied. I strongly advocated for Wicklow's inclusion in the first phase of the scheme, and it is very rewarding to see that there is a very high level of interest in its rollout. The scheme will provide all schools with 6 kilowatts of roof-mounted solar PV, which equates to approximately 16 solar panels. The full cost of installing the solar panels will be paid for entirely by the state's Climate Action Fund with no additional costs incurred by participating schools."

"The provision of free solar panels for schools is a very practical measure that the Green Party introduced in Budget 2023 to assist schools with rising energy costs. The rapid installation of solar panels on schools and other buildings is also crucial to achieving our climate objectives."

"I am in regular contact with school principals across Wicklow and in any case where there have been questions in how to apply, we were able to work through them and

complete the application process. If there are any schools that have concerns, Deputy Matthews yet to apply, I would be more than happy to assist with any concluded."



Steven Matthews TD

Huge numbers in Greystones CNS for Camogie Blitz

There was a brilliant buzz in Greystones Community National School on Thursday 25th January as over 120 girls from 3rd and 4th class took part in a camogie blitz.



Greystones Community National School camogie team

Teams from St. Laurence's N.S, Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath, Kilcoole P.S, Greystones Educate Together, St Brigid's N.S, St Fergal's N.S and the hosts Greystones CNS all participated. The small sided games really brought out the best in the girls where they were able to get multiple touches and try out a range of different playing positions. It was great to hear at the end of the blitz how many were intending on joining up with their local camogie club!

Our Young Whistlers from various schools did a brilliant job with officiating the games. Credit must also go to all the teachers, SNAs and parents who volunteer to train and bring teams to events such as these throughout the year. Finally, a massive thanks has also to go to Greystones CNS who hosted the event on the day.

The abundance of young camogie players in the North Wicklow area is a testament to the huge potential that lies within the future.



Young camogie players at the blitz in Greystones

Camogie Association expands Evolution Video series

The Camogie Association has launched the expansion of the Evolution Series which houses both the Evolution Technical Skill Series, as well as the Evolution Athletic Development Series. This suite of video content is produced specifically for coaches and caters to an array of phases across the recently launched Gaelic Games Coach Pathway.

Across the series, easily accessible visual supports are provided to coaches in the form of games and drill activities, along with the associated coaching cues, all catering towards the player at their specific point upon the Gaelic Games Player Pathway.

Series is made up of three overlapping elements, namely Skill Evolution, Game Evolution, and Drill Evolution. These elements emphasise the technical skills of the game of Camogie and provide the viewer with a little inspiration in the coaching of such.

Development Series looks to provide coaches with the cues and practices associated with the development and support of the Camogie player as an athlete. Jump Evolution provides the viewer with essential patterns in assisting the player in jump and landing mechanics. This series branch will continue to develop with a view to supporting coaches in ensuring they are provided with a visual support in how best to facilitate building strong and robust Camogie athletes.

Camogalochta, Hilda Breslin commented: "This Evolution Series presents as a vibrant and modern resource for the coaches of our game to use as an aid in providing the best experience possible to our players within their sessions. I am excited to see the incorporation of this highly valuable content into The Camogie Association's existing programmes such as 'Hurl With Me', again signalling the efforts towards providing coaches with modern and fresh content in the support of their valuable work

within our game." Technical Development and Participation Manager of the Camogie Association, Lizzy Broderick commented: "We are delighted to see this Evolution Series become available to our Camogie coaching community. As a games development team, having this type of content to hand allows us to further strengthen our offerings to the volunteers coaching the game of Camogie across the country and beyond. I look forward to seeing coaches engage with this valuable offering, and

the inevitable positive effects it will have to coaching sessions at grassroots and beyond." Going forward, the Camogie Association looks to utilize resources such as the Evolution Series in supporting coaches with easily accessible, visually appealing content, relevant to their area of coaching activity upon the Gaelic Games Coach Pathway. The Camogie Association will be releasing a weekly video on our social media platforms to highlight each individual skill contained within the series.

Children urged to get involved in iconic competition

Homebuilder Cairn has announced a major investment in supporting Community Games, the voluntary organisation which provides up to 160,000 young people, aged between 6 and 16 years, with the opportunity to develop active and healthy lives in a safe environment through sporting and cultural activities.



Cairn Community Games is calling on 6-16 year olds in Wicklow to sign up to take part in the iconic competition which has something for everyone no matter their interest, ability or talent.

Cairn is investing €3 million into Community Games over a four-year period, commencing this year, to re-enforce its continued strength and longevity, positively impacting communities across Ireland. Established in 1967, Community Games is a community driven organisation, active in over 430 towns and villages in every county in the Republic of Ireland.

Integral to the Cairn investment is a joint commitment with Community Games to increase participation by 10% to 176,000 young people by 2028, enhancing diversity and inclusion, and raising awareness within new audience groups.

Cairn's significant support of Community Games and the four-year partnership is a perfect fit given the Company's deep commitment to creating sustainable communities where people in Ireland can thrive. Showcasing the importance and prevalence of Community Games in Ireland, a recent survey found that 1 in 4 people have taken part in Community Games and 1 in 8 people surveyed claimed to have volunteered.

Integral to the investment, Cairn will become title sponsor of Community Games, as well as commit a huge volunteering effort in various youth development programmes over the duration of the investment.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

Amendment to advert published 29th January 2023
Change of dates

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

Road to be closed
Quinsborough Road, Bray.
Section between Station Road and Strand Road.

Period of closure
From Wednesday 6th March to Friday 14th June 2024.
24 hour closure.

Alternative Routes
Diversion route via R766 - Strand Road to Putland Road to Meath Road and Adelaide Road.
For vehicles not exceeding 3.2m in height diversion will be via Sidmonton Avenue.

Reason for Closure
This closure is necessary to facilitate the installation of storm water drainage either side of the railway tracks for the Bray Transport Interchange Project.

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Roads, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Co. Wicklow or via email at roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 13th February, 2024.



Shane Daniel Byrne: But He's Gay

Whale Theatre, Greystones, Saturday 10th February, 8pm (doors 7pm)
Sold out but register for returns at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for any returns.

The award winning Shane Daniel Byrne is Irish comedy's new wonderkid (in his mid 30s). He's embarking on his first national Irish tour after sold out runs at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Dublin Fringe. Once considered an exciting talent of contemporary performance art in Dublin he messed that up and now he's a comedian. Join him for his fierce and fiery début hour about whatever is wrong with him.

"My favourite new Irish comedian for many years" - David O' Doherty

Niamh Regan

Whale Theatre, Friday 9th February, 8pm (doors 7pm) Tickets €22 available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for any returns.

Niamh Regan is a critically acclaimed songwriter from county Galway, Ireland. Her debut album *Hemet* (2020, Black Gate Records) announced her arrival as one of the most distinctive songwriters in Ireland today. Earning nominations for both the RTE Folk Awards' and the Choice Awards' Album of the Year, the album received soaring praise, and led to performances on *The Late Late Show*, *Other Voices*, and *La Blogothèque*.

Following her studies in flute and guitar at UL, Regan honed her craft as a songwriter by travelling between Ireland and California, writing about her experiences along the way. As a result, her songs seamlessly weave the intimacy of the Irish lyrical tradition with the expansive breadth of American songwriters such as Karen Dalton, Stevie Nicks, and Joni Mitchell, but the resulting sound is entirely her own.

Over the past year, Niamh has been busy performing live at home and overseas, playing at Ireland's most loved festivals - *Sounds from a Safe Harbour*, *Body & Soul*, *All Together Now*, *Another Love Story*, and *Other Voices*. She has opened shows for the likes of Sam Amidon, Josh Ritter, Fionn Regan, Damien Dempsey, Paul Brady, Siorcha Richardson, The Lost Brothers, Cormac Begley, Patrick Watson, SOAK, and also joined James Vincent McMorrow at The Barbican, London.

In November 2022 she played a sold-out showcase at Hotel Café, Los Angeles; February 2023 saw her take to multiple stages at the Folk Alliance International Conference, Kansas City, USA, before travelling to a month-long tour of Australia March 2023.

She has recently returned from a tour of Switzerland, and is putting the finishing touches on her second album.



Niamh Regan

Fundraiser to save Signal

Signal Arts Centre has received over 400 donated paintings for its upcoming Fundraising event. These 15cm x 15cm artworks will be on display in the Signal Arts Centre gallery from Thursday 8th to 18th February.

On St Valentine's Day, Wednesday 14th February, at 1pm they will be available to buy in the gallery on a first-come-first-served basis. Be sure to be there when the bell rings to open sales so you don't miss out on your favourite! Online sales will open on our website from 6pm on Wednesday 14th February and will be available online at <https://signalartscentre.ie/s-hop/>

The artworks are an eclectic mix of painting, drawing, printing, photography, embroidery, sculpture, textile, wood, ceramics, leather, glass, prose, poetry and mixed media. You are sure to find the new art love-of-your-life amongst them!

Bray's longest serving and only dedicated visual arts space, Signal Arts Centre, is in dire need of funds to carry out urgent repairs. So please come

and view the amazing works they have received and take one (or two!) home for the bargain price of €50 each. To add to the fun, the pieces are hung anonymously so buyers won't know who the artist is until after they have purchased a piece.

"Signal has been in operation for over 32 years and in that time has facilitated over 600 artists to exhibit and/or work in the center. We facilitate artists and communities coming together to make art, provide workshops, talks, tell stories, screen films and even make music together.

This all happens in a century old building that was once a chip shop with living quarters attached, which, by the way, we managed to get a mort-

gage on in 2010.

"Over the years we have altered and adjusted the space to accommodate a gallery and a variety of work spaces using our own collective DIY abilities and a few pub quizzes to cover the basic materials. But the building is in need of some serious TLC. We have no insulation, no double glazing and a variety of leaks coming from old pipes and old roof repairs. The problems add enormous amounts to our utility bills and make it uncomfortable to work during the winter. We'd prefer to be spending our time and budget on supporting artists not heating and patching a leaky building. Your purchase of a piece during the fundraiser will be a huge help to us in keeping Signal going as an invaluable local resource. We look forward to seeing you here!"



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and click the link or email info@localtimes.ie and we will email you a copy!

Wicklow designer wins at Showcase 2024

Winners of the annual Showcase Awards were announced at Showcase - Ireland's International Creative Expo on Sunday 21st January. One of the country's largest international trade fairs, Showcase 2024 welcomed over 400 exhibitors and more than 4,000 buyers from Ireland and overseas. Upwards of €25 million in business was transacted across the three-day event.

The overall winner was Wicklow business Eriu Heirloom Baby Blanket by Zoe Daly and Lionel Mackey. Eiru has taken an ancient legacy of Irish gift giving and brings together a community of small, sustainable farmers who are committed to reclaiming Ireland's woollen traditions, to create a thoroughly sustainable process of making Irish woollen blankets. Eriu is continuing to build and incentivise the industry back into a place where Irish wool is valued and celebrated.

Rosemary Steen, CEO of Design & Crafts Council Ireland

commented "Showcase is Ireland's largest international trade show, known worldwide for the high standard of Irish design and craft exhibited. We are delighted to return to our 2020 numbers of almost 400 exhibitors at the RDS participating over the three day period. This shows the strong sector performance of our community as we welcome over 4,000 buyers to Dublin this weekend.

"We are expecting sales in excess of the E25 million achieved last year, driven by strong US and European interest in the event. DCCI is so proud of

all its makers involved and I want to thank all the team at Design & Crafts Council Ireland for all the hard work in bringing Showcase 2024 to life. We thank our partners, Enterprise Ireland, Local Enterprise Office, and of course the RDS, for supporting us in running such an important event in the Irish creative sectors calendar."

Showcase is becoming even more important for Ireland's micro enterprises and new start-ups, according to Tom Rooney, Head of Craft and Design, Local Enterprise Office said: "The Local

Enterprise Showcase continues to be the pinnacle of the yearly schedule for our craft and design clients. It's the one event that can have a significant impact on the direct of our clients businesses this year and for the future. Meeting one key buyer can help a small business fill its orders for a year. We've been working closely with the clients to ensure they maximise this opportunity and we're delighted to get the doors open and let these buyers meet some of Ireland best's new and up and coming craft and design businesses."

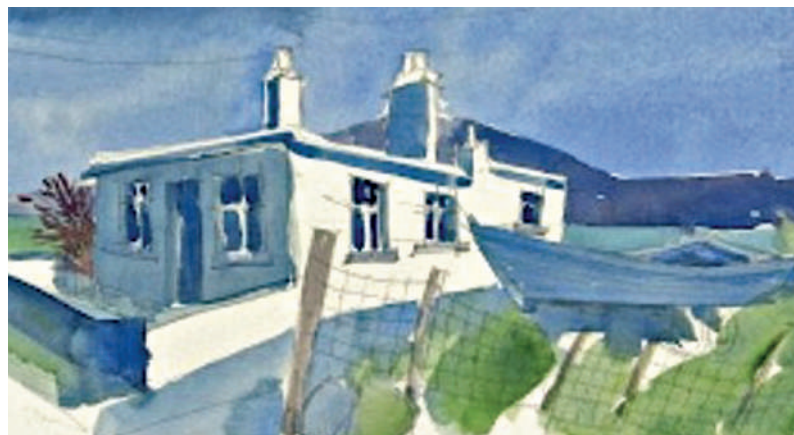


Lione Mackey and Zoe Daly of Eriu, Overall Winner

Uiscedhathanna / Watercolour

An exhibition by Barbara Allen. Signal Arts Centre, Monday 19th February to Sunday 3rd March

Uiscedhathanna/Watercolour is an exhibition concentrating on watercolour painting, should it be on paper or wood. The idea of painting on wood has been a direct result of making do with materials to hand during the lockdown heatwave of 2020 - floor boards, planks and lemon boxes from Spain depicting beaches out of reach at that time.



House near Purteen Harbour

Barbara Allen RUA (b. Belfast 1959) attended Glengormley High School where a career in art was nurtured, Barbara went on to graduate with a BA Hons Degree in Visual Communications in 1982, with a particular interest in illustration.

Selected exhibitions include, Gallery Parken Bergen, Norway 1993, Carnegie Library Bangor 2016, Irish Wings Arts Festival Paxos Greece 2017.

Works can be found in the collections of The Arts Council NI, BP Oil Europe, Norwegian Telecom, DIAGEO and several County Muse-ums throughout Ireland. Paintings have been commissioned publicly and privately from clients such as Invest NI, Ulster Television, Seafish Edinburgh and The Royal Norwegian Embassy London.

Between 1983-1993 Barbara won several travel awards from The National Trust, British Council, An Chomhairle Ealaíon and is five times winner of the RUA watercolour prize.

With a house move to Donegal the artist's interest widened to include fish and all things with a nautical flavour.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We, Simon & Elaine Kelly, intend to apply for permission for development at 16 Richmond Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of the conversion of existing attic, incorporating new angled and flat roof dormer style roofs to rear of existing two storey semi-detached dwelling. Incorporating new bedroom & en-suite areas to new attic level, replacement of existing first floor landing window with new larger window to side of existing dwelling, minor internal alterations and associated site works. 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, County 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 the receipt by the authority of the application

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Arc Design seeks full planning permission on behalf Fiona Duffy for the development at "CLUAININ", BOHILLA LANE, KILMACANOGUE, CO. WICKLOW, A98PW83 which consists of
(A) Construction of a first floor to existing house which creates part one and half and single storey house.
(B) Alterations and renovations to existing house comprising of modifications to elevations and plans.
(C) All associated site development works, drainage and landscaping to accommodate the proposed development works.
The planning application may be inspected, or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours. The planning application may be viewed online at www.wicklow.ie, under planning online enquires.

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, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application, and 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.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Automatic Plastics Limited, intend to apply for a 10-year planning permission for a proposed development that consists of the part demolition, extension, reconfiguration, and refurbishment of an existing production and manufacturing facility at School Road, Lugduff, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow. The proposed development includes for:

- Partial demolition of the existing facility, warehouses and storage shed, and excavation and site clearance at the rear of the site to facilitate the proposed works.
- Removal of existing ESB substation.
- The construction of production area; cleanrooms; a whiteroom; QC lab; plant areas, warehouse, workshops, ancillary offices, reception, canteen, and staff facilities and amenities within the existing areas to be refurbished and extension to the facility. There will be an overall gross floor area increase of c. 3,578 sq.m.
- Provision of sprinkler tank and pump house; storage silos; an ESB substation (including ESB equipment, MV switchgear and transformer) and the relocation of a generator.
- The reconfiguration of existing car parking and proposed additional parking resulting in 113 no. car spaces overall (including 5 no. disability spaces and 5 no. EV spaces).
- Provision of 2 no. bikes stores for 40 no. bicycle storage spaces.
- Truck loading bays and turning yard.
- Landscaping (including resurfacing of the existing access to the Tinahely Recycling Centre); boundary treatments and SUDS measures.
- External site lighting.
- Provision of solar PV panels at roof level and signage to the building facades.
- All associated and ancillary works and services necessary to facilitate the construction and operation of the proposed development.

This planning application will be accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The planning application and the Natura Impact Statement may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Whitegates, Wicklow Town, during its public opening hours. The planning application may be viewed online at www.wicklow.ie, under planning online enquiries. 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, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application, and 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.



Claire Timmons and Margaret Condon during rehearsals for the Ashford ICA's drama 'The Book Club of Little Witterington' in Glenealy Village Hall.

ATTENTION

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Hailey Farrell at the 'Pause for Peace' march in Arklow.

Wicklow students 'Power Up' for a more sustainable future

Students from Temple Carrig School, Greystones and Wicklow Youth Reach attended an innovative workshop at the Aviva Stadium last week, hosted by electricity grid operator, EirGrid, and non-profit youth organisation, Young Social Innovators (YSI).

The workshop, entitled 'Powering Up', brought together students from across the country to learn about the critical role EirGrid plays in decarbonising the power system and the challenges and opportunities at play as it works to transform the electricity grid for future generations.

The Wicklow students also gained an insight into the inner workings of the National Control Centre, the headquarters for matching electricity production to customer demand in real time.

EirGrid is leading the secure transition of Ireland's electricity grid to low carbon, renewable energy, creating a cleaner energy future. In line with Government targets, its ambition is to ensure up to 80% of Ireland's energy comes from renewables by 2030.

EirGrid is the Climate Action and Energy partner with Young Social Innovators, a national organisation that engages thousands of young people annually in co-creating and developing innovative ideas to address social challenges.

During the workshop, groups had the opportunity to engage in thought provoking sessions on climate justice and biodiversity, led by experts from EirGrid and YSI. The young people explored various ways to make a positive impact on the environment which they implemented into their own projects. The Temple Carrig students project 'From Blue to Green', focuses on



Temple Carrig School Greystones students Bea Dattee, Reggie Dodson, Kaithlyn Molloy, Sophie Wade, Adam Barry, Laura Burchell and teacher Cecilia Travers at the EirGrid-Young Social Innovators 'Powering Up' workshop at the Aviva Stadium. Pic Orla Murray/Coalesce

online shopping packaging and recycling.

"I think packaging is really overlooked. When you order online you don't really think about the amount of packaging that comes with that," said Bea Dattee, a Temple Carrig student.

"We hope to make people think more about the impact that packaging has. I found the talk looking at the SDGs from the United Nations really interesting, particularly about the ones that related to our project."

The Wicklow Youthreach students project 'Community Garden', will explore the benefits of a new community garden for local biodiversity.

Speaking at the event, EirGrid's chief infrastructure officer, Michael Mahon said: "We are proud to partner with YSI

for this workshop and to engage with the next generation of clean energy advocates. By empowering teenagers to develop initiatives around more sustainable energy practices in their communities, we hope to inspire them to continue the great work they are already doing in addressing climate change.

"This partnership highlights the importance of collaboration between industry leaders and youth organisations in addressing challenges of climate change and promoting sustainable development.

We look forward to seeing these projects come to life and being adopted in schools and communities around the country," added Mahon.

Young Social Innovators CEO, Roger Warnock said: "We are delighted to partner with EirGrid and participate in this innovative workshop for teenagers focused on climate action, the environment, and sustainability. The enthusiasm and creativity demonstrated by these young minds are a testament to the potential they hold as the leaders of tomorrow. Their social

innovation ideas are not only inspiring but crucial drivers for the positive change we urgently need in our world. This event perfectly aligns with our mission at YSI, as we strive to empower future change-makers and foster a collaborative spirit for a better and more sustainable tomorrow".

The workshop concluded with an opportunity for participants to share their project ideas, drawing from the day's activities around sustainable energy, positive biodiversity practices and social justice commitments.

RECRUITMENT



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to form a panel from which future permanent and temporary vacancies may be filled:

• **PART-TIME & SUBSTITUTE BRANCH LIBRARIAN – GREYSTONES & BALLYWALTRIM**

Salary €15.27 – €24.56 per hour gross
REF: 08/2024

• **PART-TIME & SUBSTITUTE SCHOOL WARDENS – GREYSTONES & BRAY**

Salary €47.75 (daily rate)
REF: 09/2024

Application Forms and further details may be obtained from Enterprise & Corporate Services at 0404 20159 or by emailing recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie and on the Wicklow County Council website www.wicklow.ie

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS THURSDAY, 29th FEBRUARY, 2024 AT 12 NOON SHARP.

Wicklow County Council reserves the right to shortlist candidates in the manner it deems most appropriate.
Wicklow County Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

Lorraine Gallagher, Director Of Services,
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Phone: 0404 20159
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e-mail: recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie



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COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons to form a panel from which future permanent and temporary vacancies may be filled

• **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (GRADE VII)**

Salary: €55,847.00.00 – €72,602.00 gross per annum (includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 06/2024

• **SENIOR EXECUTIVE LIBRARIAN (GRADE VII)**

Salary: €55,847.00.00 – €72,602.00 gross per annum (includes 2nd LSI)
REF: 10/2024

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS IS THURSDAY 29TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 12 NOON SHARP.

Application Forms and further details may be obtained from Enterprise & Corporate Services at 0404 20159 or by emailing recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie and on the Wicklow County Council website www.wicklow.ie

Wicklow County Council reserves the right to shortlist candidates in the manner it deems most appropriate.

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County Buildings,
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Phone: 0404 20159
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Unlocking Potential: DNG offering Wicklow TY students a real estate of possibilities

Leading real estate agency DNG is now offering 500 transition year students the unique chance to experience the exciting world of Irish real estate through its Transition Year Work Programme.

Registration for the interactive online work experience TY programme is now open to aspiring young real estate agents from Wicklow, with DNG set to deliver the programme

from February 21st - 23rd. Through a series of interactive exercises, the programme will provide students with a first-hand understanding of working in the Irish property

sector. They will experience a day in the life of working as an estate agent, selling property through auctions and 3rd level college and apprenticeship presentations.

Since introducing its online TY programme in 2021, the number of students participating has grown year-on-year, with DNG now having delivered the programme to 1,400 students.

Commenting on the programme, Niamh Comber, Head of Franchising at DNG said: "Securing meaningful work experience can be a source of stress for both TY students and their

parents. Now in its fourth year, our virtual TY programme approach lets us accommodate 500 TY students across Ireland, giving them the opportunity to explore the world of Irish real

estate and potentially spark a career path." DNG's Transition Year Work Programme coordinator Jennie McDonnell added: "We were thrilled to welcome students from 24 counties to our TY programme last year, and we would encourage all TY students to consider participating in this enriching experience this year. The virtual format makes it accessible to students from all corners of the country, regardless of

their location." TY students, parents, and teachers can find further information about DNG's TY programme and register for participation at <https://ty.dng.ie/>

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THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you this very special one. (Mention request) Take it, dear Heart of Jesus and place it within your broken Heart where your Father sees it. Then, in his merciful eyes it will become your favour not mine. St Anthony and St Jude, helper of the hopeless, aid me in my distress. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted. Never known to fail. Thank You. M.D.



Minister Simon Harris

38,000 people in Wicklow benefit from first ever January Bonus

Over 38,000 people in Wicklow last week benefited from the first ever January Bonus. The cost of living support was paid to the likes of Wicklow pensioners, carers, people with disabilities, lone parents and lone income families.

The January Bonus is the ninth lump sum payment delivered under Budget 2024. It will be paid on the same basis as the Christmas Bonus and will include the core weekly rate increases that

came into effect at the start of the year. Approximately 38,148 recipients are in County Wicklow, Minister Simon Harris has confirmed. Announcing the details of the double payment

today, Minister Simon Harris said: "I'm very pleased that right through-out the week, the likes of our pensioners, carers, people with disabilities, lone parents and low income families will receive a much needed double welfare payment."

"This double payment was delivered as part of Budget 2024 - recognising the fact that families are still feeling the pinch associated with the Cost of Living."

"It's a payment that's particularly welcome after the Christmas and January period, which we all know can be particularly difficult in terms of pressures

on the income of households."

"So whether you're a pensioner, a carer, someone on disability allowance or a lone parent this double lump sum will kick in on the day that you usually receive your weekly welfare payment. This is about putting more money back into the pockets of families in Wicklow and continuing to support them with the cost of living challenges that households continue to face."

The Social Protection package in Budget 2024 was the largest in the history of the State and assisted pensioners, car-

ers, people with disabilities, and families with the Cost of Living through a mix of lump sum supports and increases to weekly payments.

In addition to this series of lump-sum payments, the Budget also delivered across-the-board welfare

increases of €12 per week from January 2024, and a range of targeted measures to take effect throughout 2024.

These full list of Budget 2024 Social Protection measures is available at www.Gov.ie/DSPBudget24.

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