



**ACTIVE TRAVEL**  
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Tuesday 13th February 2024 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray, A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

# URGENT ACTION STILL NEEDED

After engagement with the Department of Education and the Education Training Board, Greystones Community College has confirmed it is now in a position to provide 48 additional school places this September.

The news means that the problem of school places in the Greystones and Kilcoole area has been somewhat alleviated, however more work needs to be done. It's been confirmed that the shortage in the area is between 70 and 80 places.

The Department has stated that it will require three additional classrooms in the area, and they believe there is sufficient space in current school buildings to accommodate that. The Department hopes to provide an update to

parents in the coming weeks once they have consulted with the relevant boards of management.

Greystones Community College released a statement on Friday saying: "The Board of Management of Greystones Community College are delighted to announce that the school is now in a position to offer an additional 48 school places for 1st year, September 2024. The Board are confident that this move will alleviate some of the pressure that is currently

being felt by families in the Greystones area due to the shortage of school places.

"The Board of Management were pleased to take this decision after meeting with Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board on February 8th, where correspondences from the Department of Education provided reassurance on addressing potential challenges which had been previously raised.

"We now look forward to welcoming



Pictured are Sinead Doyle, Ciaran Byrne and Mia Gilmore, who took part in Roundwood Variety Group's production of Aladdin in the Brockagh Centre, Laragh. Pic: Michael Kelly

## Referendum March 8th 2024

### BEFORE YOU VOTE, KNOW THE FACTS

There will be two separate votes in the Referendum. Make sure you vote on both.

#### VOTE 1.

The Government is seeking to broaden the definition of family to cover any 'durable relationship'. No definition of durable relationship is offered. The new wording does not mention children.

#### Implications of changes to the definition of Family:

- The concept of durable relationships is immediately open to legal interpretation and challenge.
- Knock-on implications for: Tax / Immigration / Social welfare / Inheritance

#### VOTE 2.

The Referendum seeks to take the words 'woman' and 'mothers' out of Article 41.2 in the Constitution, by removing references to their role in the home, replaced by a general reference to providers of care. Research shows that up to 90% of work in the home is carried out by women. It is argued that Article 41.2 says a woman's place must be in the home rather than in the workplace. This is not so. It says that women should have the right to choose and be supported in that choice.

### Understand the implications of the proposed Constitutional changes before voting on March 8th

#### Referendum March 8th 2024

Chair of the Electoral Commission Marie Baker has clarified that the Constitution does not say "a woman's place is in the home" but that mothers provide an "important support to society" and should not "have to go out to work" due to economic necessity.

#### Implications of removing Article 41.2:

- Erases the mention of Woman and Mothers from the Constitution.
- Affects Tax, Social Welfare and maintenance assessments.
- Removes the State's obligation to protect all stay-at-home mothers/parents

High Court judges have previously stated that the current wording can extend to both unmarried mothers and stay-at-home fathers.

WW4W are advocating a \*No vote\* to support women in all their various roles

#### INFORMATION

#### EVENING:

Feb 22nd Glenview

Hotel, 7.30pm.

All welcome.



**Wicklow Women**

**4 Women**

**f: Wicklow Women**

**4 Women**

**@wicklowwomen4w1**

an additional 48 new students to join our vibrant and dynamic school. The whole school community at Greystones Community College look forward to receiving positive news from the Department of Education in relation to the progression of the permanent building for the College in the coming weeks."

Minister Simon Harris attended on Thursday evening of last week a meeting with Department of Education officials where he received updates on Greystones school places for primary school students.

Speaking on Friday Minister Harris said: "This is really good news, I really want to thank Greystones Community College community for their tireless efforts. The 48 additional school places will come as great relief to a number of families and parents

across Greystones.

"However this doesn't change the broader issue. As outlined at the meeting it is simply and utterly unacceptable that Greystones Community College, an incredible school in our community, has not yet gone to construction.

"Temple Carrig extension needs to proceed and Colaiste Chraobh Abhann extension to progress too. These are three major educational priorities for the area and I won't stop applying pressure until we get action.

"We have all worked so hard to see this school established, it has a brilliant principal, brilliant teachers, a brilliant school community and people have worked so hard for reasonably good interim accommodation but now is the time to press go for a permanent build. We need the sod turned and turned urgently, positive news on this is

essential in the next

couple of weeks."

Speaking after last

week's meeting, Deputy

Jennifer Whitmore said: "I welcome com-

mitments from the

Department of Education

Continued on page 3

RECYCLING TO CREATE RESOURCES Authorised Treatment Facility

## multimetals

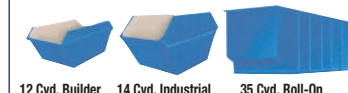
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Eliana Gallagher with Jack and Alannah Traynor at the launch of the Purple Heart Appeal. With over 215,000 cancer survivors living in Ireland today, Purple House Cancer Support is asking individuals, schools, shops, clubs and businesses to help to 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. Anyone can get involved with the appeal by visiting [purplehouse.ie](http://purplehouse.ie) or by contacting Purple House on 01-2866966 and by emailing [info@purplehouse.ie](mailto:info@purplehouse.ie) to request a Purple Heart Appeal Pack.

## Crime and punishment in 19th century Wicklow

Wicklow Town Branch Library, The Mall, Main Street, Wicklow Town, will host the third of its monthly local history lectures at 7 p.m. on Thursday February 15th at which James Scannell will look at 'Rough Justice: crime and punishment in 19th century Wicklow'.

From the latter half of the eighteenth century, in a bid to punish and deter crime, the Irish Parliament in Dublin enacted increasing draconian legislation in the form of death sentences. While those crimes punishable by death were reduced from over two hundred at the start of the century to a mere ten by 1820, punishments remained harsh and those in receipt of a sentence of more than two years were generally condemned to transportation overseas to the Caribbean islands or Australia.

Following from his hugely successful 'Rough Justice' talks series in Dublin last year for the 'One Dublin - One Book Festival', 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. All are welcome - admission is free but booking is required - contact Wicklow Library on 0404-67025 or email [wicklowlocalstudies@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:wicklowlocalstudies@wicklowcoco.ie) to book your place.

## Soup & sandwiches

The next Greystones Soup and Sandwiches Lunch will be on Tuesday, 20th February from 12.30pm until 2pm in the Swann Hall, St. Patrick's church,

Greystones. You are very welcome to join us to participate in the good chat and the delicious food. A suggested donation of €7 will be given to local homeless charities.

## History talk in Enniskerry Library

Local historian, author, and chairman of the Bray Cualann Historical Society Brian White will present 'Enniskerry & District - Part 1' at 11 a.m. on Friday February 16th in which he will recall people, places and events associated with Enniskerry. Admission is free but booking is required. To reserve a place call 01-2864339 or email: [enniskerrylib@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:enniskerrylib@wicklowcoco.ie).

## Bray Cualann Historical Society

Bray Cualann Historical Society would like to invite you to a historical presentation to mark the events of 150 years ago that shaped the future healthcare when Lucinda Sullivan nee Brady opened a home to care for physically disabled children in Bray. As a result of Lucinda's actions other childcare facilities were opened in Bray. The evening will commence with a wreath laying at the Cornerstone Church (St Paul's) at 7pm and will continue in the Royal Hotel. The evening will conclude with an illustrated presentation on Victorian Childcare in Bray.

## WWHS Lecture: 'The Elmes Letters: Protestant Networks in 1798 Wexford'

West Wicklow Historical Society will host a lecture on Thursday, February 15th at 8pm. in the Lalor Centre (W91 XW57, near St. Joseph's Church, Baltinglass). The speaker, Ida Milne will deliver a talk on 'The Elmes Letters: Protestant Networks in 1798 Wexford'. It will be based on the family letters recovered from Robinstown House in Co. Wexford dating back to the period of the 1798 rebellion. The letters reflect the life at the time including events such as the Battle of Ross and the infamous Scullabogue burning. The impact of the rebellion on Protestant families in Wexford would no doubt have been similar for families in West Wicklow.

Dr. Milne is a native of Ferns. She is a history lecturer at Carlow College (St. Patrick's) and her PhD was on the social, political and medical impact of the 1918-19 influenza pandemic. With Ian d'Alton, Ida edited the book 'Protestant and Irish, the minority's search for place in Independent Ireland (2019)'. In November 2019 she was invited by WWHS to talk on 'the Spanish Flu' just three months before the latest pandemic hit Ireland. Admission: members €5; non-members €8.

# Get lost in a good book for Ireland Reads campaign

Libraries throughout County Wicklow are taking part in Ireland Reads, a campaign to get the whole country reading this month in the lead up to a national day of reading on Saturday, February 24th.

Libraries have teamed up with publishers, book-sellers, authors, and others for the campaign which is part of the government's Healthy Ireland programme and aims to celebrate reading and all the benefits it can have for wellbeing and enjoyment.

The campaign is asking everyone to 'Get Lost in a Good Book' during February and especially on Ireland Reads Day, Saturday, February 24th.

Wicklow County Council Library Service will be celebrating Ireland Reads through various events and activities across our branch network throughout February in the build up to Ireland Reads Day.

Visit your local branch library to take part in an event or just to see what's on offer. The theme for 2024 is 'Get Lost' and we hope you will come to your local library to celebrate the act of getting lost in a good book!

Events taking place on Ireland Reads Day include:

- Wicklow Town Library: Finger Puppet Workshop for children 5 years old and up, featuring folk and fairy tales from 2-3pm.
- Bray Library: Comic Club Adult Edition. Join Comic Club artist Elida Maiques and Graphic Novel author Debbie Jenkinson from 3-4pm, as they discuss their favourite graphic novels.

A full schedule of events will be announced on the libraries website and social media pages.

The Ireland Reads website also offers book recommendations suited to a person's interests and the time they have available. There are more than 1,500 recommendations from librarians all around the country for all interests and reading levels.

A website user can simply enter their favourite type of book and how long they would like to read each day and the website will offer the perfect book suggestion and work out how long it will take to complete - so you can set yourself a chal-



lenge if you're finding it hard to get back to reading. People can also recommend a book to a friend through the website.

Urging people to get involved, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, said: "Wicklow County Council Library Service hopes we can get the whole county reading this month, especially those who might not be avid readers right now. If you don't read, or you haven't read in a while, this is the

perfect time to give it a try."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, stated: "Getting lost in a good book is one of the best things you can do, at any age. Reading is great for your wellbeing, a good book can relax you, it can teach you, it can take you places you've never been and introduce you to people you've never met."

A number of well-known campaign ambassadors are on board to help promote the campaign

nationally, including Booker Prize winner, Paul Lynch, Marian Keyes, Colm Toibin, Rick O'Shea, Liz Nugent and others.

People can find out what reading means to them and why they support the campaign at [www.irelandreads.ie](http://www.irelandreads.ie).

Find out about all that's happening for Ireland Reads or to get or share book recommendations at [www.irelandreads.ie](http://www.irelandreads.ie) or visit [www.wicklow.ie/Living/Services/Libraries](http://www.wicklow.ie/Living/Services/Libraries) for more on what's happening in County Wicklow.

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# 'IS THERE A REPORT?'

A roads report from a planning file concerning the Charlesland dual carriageway is now the subject of a Garda investigation. Independent councillor Tom Fortune says he is being frustrated by Wicklow County Council in his efforts to try and view the roads report, which he says is "a primary document in any planning file".

The Charlesland dual carriageway (a dual carriageway through the housing development from the R761 Kilcoole Road to Mill Road) formed part of a larger planning application which included a residential development, creche and community centre, submitted to Wicklow County Council in 2001.

Cllr Fortune, who has repeatedly

aired his views in the public domain on the matter of the erosion of elected local councillors' powers over the last number of years, said "This is a primary document in any planning file, it is a health and safety report. A key duty of a public representative is the holding of the system (in this case local Government) to account. To this end the role of the local councillor is vital and must be protected."

Cllr Fortune says at the end of August last year he was requested by a constituent to obtain for them a copy of a roads report from a planning file. He wrote to the local Authority requesting this on 8th September 2023. As of 1st February 2024, despite asking for confirmation of the existence of the roads report, Cllr Fortune says he has still not received an answer to this simple question.

"I mailed them on the 8th September, 5th October, 24th October and the 5th January," he said.

Cllr Fortune says on 20th October 2023 he was informed by mail that the file in question is the subject of An Garda Síochána investigation, that the



Cllr Tom Fortune



Lucy and Sophie Nicol at the Powerscourt Distillery's St. Brigid's Day celebrations

file had been made available to the Gardai.

"I was also informed that the planning department cannot engage with me directly in relation to the matter," said Cllr Fortune. "I mailed Wicklow County Council on 5th January 2024 saying that I had investigated what they had informed me and that I believed the matter is not Sub Judice as it is not before the court, that there is not any charge in any court. As a public representative requesting information, I told them that I should receive it,

that it is a public file and my understanding is that a planning file is an 'on demand' file."

Cllr Fortune says his frustration on this matter has increased as constituents are asking why he has not clarified the matter regarding the report.

"I am further informed that the file in An Bord Pleanála has been reviewed and that there is no Roads report in it. This is a very serious matter. I mailed on 5th January asking for confirmation that the report was in

the County Council file. It is now the 1st of February and I have received no response. This is not acceptable and is an interference not allowing me carry out my duties as a democratically elected public representative."

Wicklow Times contacted Wicklow County Council for comment. The Council said "All documentation that is part of the Garda investigation cannot be released to any party as to do so would be an interference with the investigative process."

# URGENT ACTION STILL NEEDED

Continued from page 1

that three new classes will be established to accommodate students on waiting lists in Greystones and Kilcoole. The Department is in talks with school patrons and boards of management right now. The department is also conducting onsite visits to address any issues that may arise from the additional classrooms. The Depart-

ment confirmed that there would be updates issued to parents in the coming weeks. I know parents and students will be relieved to get this news.

"In the meeting I also raised the need to progress the three promised school builds for the area and have them completed as soon as possible to ensure that we are not back in this situation again next

year. These include a new permanent building for Greystones Community College. The tender for this school has been out for a year and is back with the Department now.

"Greystones Community College is part of a bundle of 10 schools out for tender with the Department of Education. I welcome the confirmation that GCC is a top priority in this

bundle as I have raised the need for this with the Minister of Education before now. We need diggers on the ground in Greystones once these tenders are approved.

"The school extensions for Temple Carraig and Coláiste Chraobh Abhann also need to be prioritised. These need to be delivered urgently to prevent this school place shortage from arising again. There was a suggestion at the meeting that these two school buildings would still be in development by next year. I will continue to keep raising this with the Department as a matter of urgency.

"I have been asking the Department to detail their plans to deal with this since October 2023 and it really should not have taken this long for the Department to do their homework. The principals of all three schools affected also warned that this would be an issue last year.

"There is a glaring need for more school places in the Greystones and Kilcoole area. This has been the case for several years and has been made obvious since October this year when we learned there would be a shortage of nearly one hundred school places for the next aca-

demic year. Following a meeting with the Department of Education this week, I am calling on them again to fast-track school buildings for Greystones and Kilcoole."

Green Party TD Steven Matthews said: "The positive news for parents is that following extensive work between the Department of Education and principals in each school, a formal update on how the intake for students for the coming school year will be managed will be issued to parents in the coming weeks.

"While this is welcome progress, it isn't fast enough and represents a failure in the Department of Education's forward planning system. Greystones has experienced rapid population growth and the provision of school places has not kept up with that.

"The shortage of secondary school places in Greystones has been a longstanding issue that has impacted countless families in recent years. Each year I have consistently flagged that it wasn't a one off and required long-term planning rather than the annual scramble that parents and students have to endure each Spring/Summer.

"Every TD has received multiple assurances that all students that qualify for a place will be accommodated this year but we need a clear plan of action of how this will happen. This also needs to be urgently communicated with all the families impacted as the lack of information and engagement from the Department is causing further unnecessary stress.

"There are long-term solutions available, but it will require the new school building for Greystones Community College and the extensions for Temple Carraig and Colaiste Chraobh Abhann to be prioritised. Each project is at various stages of progress but if we are serious about putting in place a long-term solution, they need to be fast-tracked. There are set processes in place, but I have emphasised the need to work through these steps as soon as possible and avoid weeks/ months of wasted time through

administrative box checking and red tape.

"School management and teachers from each of the Greystones schools are doing extraordinary work despite a shortage of space and lack of facilities in some cases. I will continue to work directly with school principals and any family impacted but what is needed is clear communication regarding a plan to ensure that students are accommodated this year and for the school construction projects to be expedited," concluded Deputy Matthews.

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**Ciarán HOGAN**  
Bray East Rep

**Patrick MURPHY**  
EU Candidate



# Over €8 million for safer walking, cycling and wheeling

The Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan TD and Minister of State Jack Chambers TD joined National Transport Authority (NTA) Deputy CEO Hugh Creegan to announce €290m in funding to local authorities across Ireland to support the rollout of walking and cycling infrastructure in 2024. €8m is being made available in 2024 towards the delivery of approximately 28 Active Travel schemes in Co Wicklow.

This latest allocation means 2024 will be the year that the Government's total investment for active travel infrastructure since 2020 will smash the €1bn mark. This investment has seen more than 600km of cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure delivered since 2020 under the NTA Active Travel Programme.

The Active Travel Investment Programme for 2024 will fund approximately 800 new and existing Active Travel projects.

Minister Simon Harris said: "I am delighted that Wicklow County Council is in line for over €8 million in funding to make our towns and villages more travel friendly for everybody in the County as well as tourists.

"This level of funding will be transformative and positive investment for Wicklow and the communities across the county and speaks to the level of commitment the Government has in making our travel routes safer and more accessible.

"This investment has seen more than 600km of cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure delivered since 2020 across the country under the NTA Active Travel Programme.

"With this funding we will be able to deliver small and large projects dedicated to the wellbeing of all, including a major project worth €1.2 million to deliver a Pathfinder project in Greystones and €3.5 million to improve the bus terminus at the Bray DART interchange among other small projects like €100,000 to improve travel routes from Delgany Village to Mill Road.

"These 28 Active Travel Projects have a hugely positive impact on the community, on people out and about for a walk or a cycle, on people with disabilities and also on local businesses who benefit from increased footfall thanks to safer routes and travel paths. These projects make our county more attractive,



Minister Ryan and Minister Chambers with Giorgia Grogan from Artane and her dad Jonathan announcing the Active Travel funding.

healthier and often allow for increased community-based activities.

"Now that the projects have their funding it's essential we get the ball rolling and get them completed as soon as possible. Especially as the days get brighter, warmer and hopefully dryer. As a Minister in Government and as a proud representative of Wicklow I will always push for further investment in our towns and villages to make them more accessible and safer for all."

Welcoming the announcement, Social Democrats Local Election candidate Aaron McAllorum said: "Again, Wicklow County Council will be well funded for active travel projects, I am very pleased to see the Bray Bridge Project can again make further advancements towards delivery.

"I believe this can be somewhat of a game changer in terms of getting people moving through the town by foot, bike and bus.

"However, I am again disappointed that no maintenance fund has been developed by Minister Eamon Ryan for 2024 - infrastructure delivered via Active Travel funding will need to be kept in best possible state if people are to use it.

"Wicklow County Council was allocated €8.4m in 2023 for Active Travel projects but had only made claim to €2.1m by the end of October, having surrendered over €3m back to the NTA in 2021 and 2022, does the Council have the capacity to use its allocation is something I will seek to have addressed."

In relation to the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme, Mr McAllorum said: "Where appropriate, stops should have some protection from the elements. I accept in the context of accessibility, street clutter or restricted spaces, it is not always possible.

"Public transport use must be an attractive alternative to the use of private vehicles and providing some sort of outside comfort while waiting for the bus is important given the weather conditions that often prevail in this country. I hope to continue to see further enhancements in 2024 in Bray and across Wicklow."

Laurie Kearon, the Fine Gael local election candidate for South Wicklow, has expressed enthusiastic support for the National Transport Authority's (NTA) recent decision to allocate significant funding to four key

projects in Arklow.

She said "We are reaching a significant milestone with an investment of €1 billion in active travel. This funding is not just about improving transportation; it's about transforming our communities into more attractive, safer, and healthier environments. These projects in Arklow are a testament to our dedication to enhancing the quality of life in our towns and cities through sustainable and eco-friendly initiatives."

The investments in Arklow include plans for new cycling and pedestrian pathways, improvements to existing routes, and enhanced safety measures around local schools. These initiatives are expected to greatly benefit the local community by promoting healthier lifestyles, reducing traffic congestion, and improving air quality.

Kearon adds, "The impact of this sustained investment in active travel is evident in the positive changes we're witnessing in our urban and rural landscapes. By focusing on small and large-scale projects, we're not only upgrading our transport infrastructure but also fostering a more connected and environmentally conscious community."

Project	Council	Allocation
Bray DART Interchange - Bus Terminus Improvements	Wicklow County Council	€ 3,500,000
Greystones Active Travel - Pathfinder project	Wicklow County Council	€ 1,200,000
Arklow South Active Travel Improvements	Wicklow County Council	€ 750,000



Celina Stephenson and Pamela Walsh at the Powerscourt Distillery's St. Brigid's Day celebrations.



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# Bray residents groups unite to form alliance

Residents Associations from the Bray area have united together to form The Alliance of Bray Residents (ABR).

A recent meeting of 15 residents associations and groups from the Bray, spawned from the engagement initiated through the Bray Neighbourhood Watch group, has established the new group. The meeting was held to discuss better ways of engaging with elected representatives, the council executive, and other key stakeholders in Bray to ensure that residents' concerns are addressed.



Attendance at the inaugural meeting of the Alliance of Bray Residents included (Back Row): Tony Curran, Parnell Road Neighbourhood Watch; Liz Ferris, Bray Head RA; Liam McGarry, Bray Head RA; Robert Earls, Sidmonton Gardens RA; Eamonn Burgess, Sidmonton Court RA; Donal Enright, Bray Head RA; Brian Hickey, Sidmonton Gardens RA; Michael Lochrin, Bray Head RA. (Front Row): Clare Power, Sidmonton Square; Lorraine Duffin, Dargle Area RA; Clare O'Connor, Bray Head RA; Teresa McLaughlin, Elgin Heights Neighbourhood Watch; Patricia O'Leary, Sugarloaf Crescent RA

"This initiative to combine forces to demand action on areas of common interest has been heartily welcomed by all Residents Associations and groups that we have been able to contact and the Alliance welcomes affiliation from all established residents' groups that we haven't yet been able to contact," said Clare O'Connor of Bray

"Piecemeal responses to address individual traffic problems cannot work as they simply shift the problem from one area to the other. A comprehensive plan for the town, developed in consultation with residents and other stakeholders, is urgently needed".

Malcolm Goggin of Briar Wood Residents' Association stressed that

Head Residents Association, convened the first meeting of ABR..

The meeting identified traffic management and policing as their two priority issues.

"Snarled traffic has been a problem in the town for many years, and this is going to get much worse when all the new developments currently being built and planned for in and around Bray come on stream," said Clare.

"Better policing in Bray was the second key priority identified by ABR. "We need more Gardaí on the ground," said Lorraine Duffin of Dargle Area Residents' Association, "to help road users to observe urban speed limits and keep our footpaths clear of parked cars, scooters & bikes so that the town and our residen-

"Such a comprehensive traffic plan for the town is critical for the rejuvenation of Bray, both commercially and socially, for example the Bike Rental scheme has proven a huge success in the town, this could be extended and many more traffic initiatives implemented that could have a large and long lasting positive result for the area".

There was agreement that this be raised with all candidates in the local elections next June.

There was agreement that this be raised with all candidates in the local elections next June.

tial neighbourhoods are safe places to walk, particularly for children and those with mobility challenges."

It was also highlighted that the number of Gardaí allocated to the town has reduced substantially, from 135 in 2009 to 90 in 2023 (a decrease of a third), despite an increase in population of over 20% in the same period.

"It is crucial that the numbers in our Community Garda service is returned to, and maintained at, pre divisional change levels as this is critical to engagement by residents with An Garda Síochána" said Lorraine.

There are particular concerns that, with the establishment of the new Garda Wexford/Wicklow Division the current unacceptably low numbers of Gardaí will be set as the benchmark for the town's

policing needs.

"With this unconscionable reduction in Garda numbers and resources is it any wonder that we are seeing an increase in drug use and anti-social behaviour on our streets?" asked Lorraine. "It is also crucial that the numbers in our Community Garda service is returned to, and maintained at, pre divisional change levels as this is critical to engagement by residents with An Garda Síochána."

The Alliance will be seeking meetings with Bray Municipal District councillors and with senior Garda management in the Division to discuss how we can all work together to resolve these problems in a speedy manner. The Alliance welcomes affiliation from established residents' groups in the town.

## Is it time to review Bray's bollards?

Sinn Féin TD John Brady and Cllr Mick Ryan say the plastic bollards erected along Bray Main Street are causing traffic congestion, while Green Party Councillor Erika Doyle has defended the bollards for providing safety for cyclists and preventing cars parking on the Main Street.

Deputy Brady said "The focus of apprehension lies particularly on Bray Main Street, where these bollards have become a source of significant traffic congestion, creating a bottleneck effect due to the insufficient width of the road in sections. The road's constrained dimensions hinder the smooth passage of buses and vans, resulting in a gridlock that obstructs the entire street.

"The purpose of installing the bollards was to create a segregated cycle track. In principle this is something that we support. However, this should be done only following a detailed survey on feasibility of installing them and ensuring that it can be done without having a serious impact on the safety of other road users. It is important to ensure the safety of cyclists and the creation of segregated cycleways do this, however there are other ways to achieve this, and these must be explored.

"The bollards were installed by the council without any public consultation with the public or indeed local councillors. This should not be the way that schemes that will impact so many are implemented. This congestion on Bray Main Street not only compromises the efficiency of traffic flow but also poses a considerable challenge to pedestrian safety. The inability of buses and vans to navigate the narrowed road leads to disruptions that impact both vehicular and foot traffic. There have been instances where emergency vehicles have been delayed when they were unable to pass other vehicles due to the restricted roadway."

Councillor Ryan said "It is important at this stage that an urgent and thorough review of the current bol-

lard placement be carried out. Our concern extends beyond Bray Main Street to other areas within the town where these plastic bollards have suffered damage, escalating safety issues. Damaged bollards, now scattered across cycle tracks, present a clear and immediate risk to cyclists and pedestrians alike. This poses a threat to the safety and well-being of those utilising these tracks for daily commuting and recreation. In light of these pressing issues, we call upon Wicklow County Council to prioritise the safety and efficiency of Bray's infrastructure by initiating a comprehensive review of the plastic bollards' impact.

"This review should assess the implications on traffic congestion and safety hazards, seeking solutions to rectify the current challenges. It is our sincere hope that the Council will respond promptly to these concerns, ensuring the effective functionality of Bray's roads and cycle tracks for the benefit of all residents and visitors. The well-being and safety of our community depend on proactive measures to address these pressing issues."

However Cllr Doyle argued that the causes of traffic congestion on Bray Main street are many and varied and that solutions often involve difficult decisions, which some local representatives are reluctant to make. Cllr Doyle said "it's easy to stand and point at issues and find something or somebody to blame", but she is more interested in being part of a solution.

Cllr Doyle said "Anybody familiar with the Main Street will know that traffic congestion has been an issue for many years. We know that currently

more than half of journeys under 2km are taken by car. Ten schools are dotted along the road from the Vevay to the Dublin road with many thousands of people using the Main Street during peak times. However the hierarchy or road users puts pedestrians and cyclists first, as they are the more vulnerable road users. The irony is, the more people that feel empowered and safe to walk and cycle, the less congested the roads will be! The bollards are a temporary solution to the very real problem of cars parking along Bray Main Street. Ironically, when cars parked along both sides, which often happened, the frequency of large vehicles facing difficulty getting past each other was much higher. And it has to be said that some cars are still parking in the areas with no bollards, and this causes issues.

"Cars parked on cycle lanes and footpaths is hugely dangerous for pedestrians, particularly those who are mobility impaired or have buggies or wheelchairs. Cyclists too, especially children on their way to school on bikes were having to wobble into oncoming traffic



Sinn Féin TD John Brady and Cllr Mick Ryan

to get past cars parked on the main street 'just for a minute'. I'd be the first to say the bollards are not a particularly aesthetically pleasing solution, but they allow cyclists and pedestrians and kids on scooters some peace of mind when making their way along the main street. In the future, the entire Main Street will have to undergo changes to allow traffic to flow and buses travel freely through. It will be interesting to see if these works are supported by the people who see safety bollards as the cause of traffic congestion. The simple truth is that if we prioritize cars to the detriment of pedestrian and cyclists, more cars will use an area, and that creates.. yes, even more traffic.

"Too often cyclists are viewed as hobby environmentalists but let's not forget a great many people cycle because they cannot afford a car, are choosing to remove themselves from traffic or are looking to improve their fitness. People who walk or cycle in the town centre are helping reduce traffic congestion and should be supported and kept safe. Anybody serious about

helping people move around their town should work towards solutions instead of vaguely stating 'there's another way to do it' without offering any suggestions as to what that might actually consist of."

Social Democrats candidate Aaron McAllorum also weighed in on the issue: "Fundamentally, I have no objection to the provision of segregation in a confined road space, it does provide an aspect of comfort and safety for those using the cycleway," he said.

"The issues brought to me were from some business owners in the Town stating that they are having difficulty in accepting inbound stock and so on, some traders informed me that no consultation process was undertaken.

"I also contacted the County Fire Head last November in order get its views on the installations from a health & safety perspective in the context of blue light service response times - I have not received a response to date. Communication from the Municipal to stakeholders should have been far better on this matter".



Cllr Erika Doyle



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

#### Roads to be closed

Vevay Road north of Church Road.  
Killarney Road north of Church Road.  
Main Street, Town Hall to Quinsboro Road.  
Quinsborough Road.  
Eglington Road.  
Seymour Road.  
Seapoint Road, east of Seymour Road.  
Strand Road.

#### Period of closure

From 1.30 pm until 3.30 pm Sunday 17th March, 2024.

#### Alternative Routes

Alternative route for traffic accessing East Bray will be via Putland Road and Sidmonton Road or Meath Road.

Local North – South traffic through Bray will be diverted via Church Road, King Edward Road, Herbert Road and Main Street Bray, North of its junction with Herbert Road. Access will be available to the Herbert Road carpark.

The parade route is from the Town Hall, Vevay Road, Bray (opposite St Patrick's School) proceeding down Main Street, turning right onto Florence Road, Eglington Road, turning right onto Quinsborough, turning left onto Seymour Road, right onto Seapoint Road and concludes on the Strand Road.

Traffic management will be in place during the passing of the parade.

#### Reason for Closure

To facilitate the Bray St. Patricks Day parade.

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, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at [roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 20th February, 2024.



# 'Wicklow is no place for renters'

Last Thursday in Dail Eireann, Deputy Jennifer Whitmore raised the issue of increasing rents in county Wicklow. This follows on from the publication of the Residential Tenancies Board Rental Report Index for Q3 2023 which found increases of up to 13% in rents in Wicklow over the last year.

Following the release of the report Deputy Whitmore asked the Minister for Finance during Questions on Promised Legislation what the government is going to do to bring rents in Wicklow back to affordable levels.

Speaking after the debate in the Dail last week Deputy Whitmore said "Today's report paints a grim picture for renters in Wicklow. The RTB have found that average rent in Wicklow for new tenants is now a staggering €1596 per month. This represents a 13.1% increase on this time last year.

"The average rent for already existing tenants in Wicklow also rose in the last year. It now stands at €1308 which represents a 4.6% increase on this time last year. This is unsustainable. The lack of affordable rentals in Wicklow has been an issue for years now and this current government are asleep at the wheel when it comes to controlling rents.

"What these means in real terms is that young people in their 20s and 30s are being pushed out of the towns they grew up in here in Wicklow and can see no roadmap back. We are also seeing the growth of a generation in their 50s and 60s, who

used to be able to rent affordably in Wicklow who are now facing into paying the highest rent of their lifetimes as they try to plan for retirement.

"It is shameful that people can no longer aspire to live near their families and in the communities they came from because they are being priced out of the market."

Deputy Whitmore went on to say "The Minister's response today in the Dail was wholly inadequate. He gave no indication of a change to housing policy from government. The status quo that government seem happy to maintain is resulting in punishing rents for people across Wicklow in towns like Bray, Greystones, Wicklow and Baltinglass.

"It is beyond time for government action on the cost of both rent and home purchases in Wicklow. Rents will not go down in Wicklow until such time as we have a large body of affordable housing. This will take years to progress, and in the meantime rents will continue to rise if government to do not intervene to give Wicklow renters a much needed break."

In response to the new figures from the RTB, Wayne Stanley, Executive Director at the Simon Communities of Ireland said: "the

difference between existing and new tenancies is the gap that too many families and individuals are not able to bridge. In combination with rising cost and short supply, it is a driving factor in homelessness."

Sinn Féin TD John Brady said: "The Residential Tenancies Board rent report released this week shows private sector rents continuing out of control. State wide, new rents are up 11% while existing rents are up 5%. In Dublin, new rents are rising sharply at 10% while existing rents are up 4%.

"Across the state, 22 counties have recorded new rents above 10% with Clare seeing a rise of 19% and Wexford hitting 24%. Meanwhile, existing rents are up more than 5% in 19 counties. In Wicklow the average rent in existing tenancies is €1,307.64, this represents a year-on-year increase of 4.6% for existing tenants.

"The cost of new tenancies according to the RTB report is now an average of €1,596, representing a year-on-year increase of 13.1% for new tenants. The spiralling costs across the state are witnessing a substantial fall in the number of new tenancies, with the number in Wicklow falling by



Clara and Tara Byrne, who took part in Roundwood Variety Group's production of Aladdin, in the Brockagh Centre, Laragh.

22.3% for Q3 2023.

"The high level of increase among existing tenants provides growing evidence of landlords within Rent Pressure Zones breaking the 2% annual rent increase cap. While it is not possible to determine the extent of non-compliance with the RPZ cap, it is clear that it is happening. The RTB must set out what they are doing to enforce the rule for existing tenants and for existing properties between tenancies. To date, enforcement of the RPZ caps has been almost non-existent.

"With each passing report, the situation for renters gets more dire. There is too little stock available and rents for new and existing tenancies are rising at unacceptable levels.

"Meanwhile the Government is not meeting their cost rental targets, which were too low to begin with. And increasingly AHB and LDA cost rental is unaffordable.

"Government must urgently ban rent increases for all existing and new tenants and in new rentals. They must also increase the renters tax credit and put a full month's

rent back into every private renter's pocket.

Most importantly, they must dramatically increase and accelerate the delivery of genuinely affordable cost rental homes and of social homes as this is the only real solution to the crisis in the private rental sector.

The failure of the government to address the crisis in housing continues to punish workers and families across Wicklow. The solutions brought forward by Sinn Féin offer a pathway out of the mess created by the government."

**Tallaght Outlet**  
phone: 01-4940200

**Opening Times**

Mon - Sat (10.00am - 5.00pm)

Sun & Bank Holidays - Closed

Unit B7, South City Business Pk, Tallaght, D24



**Ballybrack Outlet**  
phone: 01-2720788

**Opening Times**

Mon - Sat (10.00am - 5.30pm) Thurs 7.30 pm

Sun - Closed (Bank Hols 2.00pm - 5.30pm)

Church Road, Ballybrack, Co. Dublin





# Bray Chamber voices concern over weekend Dart service cancellations

Bray Chamber of Commerce has written to Irish Rail to express deep concerns regarding the scheduled closures of weekend Dart services in the area due to the ongoing engineering works carried out by Irish Rail.

The Chamber stated that while it acknowledges the importance of infrastructure improvements for the betterment of the rail network, it believes that it is crucial to address the potential repercussions on the local economy and tourism in Bray.

Irish Rail, under the National Development Plan, has embarked on a commendable journey to enhance the rail network with

record investments.

However, the impact of these infrastructure developments on local businesses, especially in a town like Bray which heavily relies on tourism, cannot be overlooked. The cancellation of Dart services at selected weekends (and Bank Holidays) poses challenges for both residents and visitors, affecting their accessibility to the town and potentially deterring

travel plans. The Bray Chamber of Commerce recognises the efforts made by Irish Rail to minimize disruptions, such as scheduling works during off-peak hours and avoiding major events. Still, Bray Chamber emphasises the need for continuous collaboration and communication to ensure that the interests of local businesses, during busy bank holidays and key tourist seasons, are duly considered.



Chamber President, Kieran Ward says "Tourism is a vital contributor to Bray's economy, and any hindrance to transportation services can have a direct impact on footfall. The Chamber calls for open dialogue between Irish Rail and the local business community to discuss potential solutions and

ensure that the town's economic interests are safeguarded during this period of infrastructural development. We understand the challenges faced by Irish Rail in balancing necessary works with minimal disruption, and we believe that by working together, we can find collaborative solutions that

benefit both the rail network and the local economy. The Chamber looks forward to receiving more detailed information about the major works scheduled for 2024 and anticipates further updates on how the potential impacts on local businesses and tourism will be mitigated."

## Local authorities call on landowners to cut hedgerows

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) and the County and City Management Association (CCMA) are calling on land-owners to cut their hedgerows before the March 1 deadline, to ensure they are not causing a potentially serious road safety hazard.

Properly maintained hedges protect vulnerable road users who are not forced onto the road by overgrown hedges. It additionally affords motorists a clear view of what is in front of them or around the a bend, especially on local rural roads in the case of sightlines at junctions or obstructions to road signs. Overgrown hedgerows and roadside verges can result in road fatalities and serious injury collisions.

In accordance with the Wildlife Act, it is an offence to cut, grub, burn or otherwise destroy any vegetation growing on any land not then cultivated or growing in any hedge or ditch, between 1st March and 31st August. There are some exceptions to this including if there are grounds to act for road safety reasons. Local authorities can and do either take direct action themselves or serve a notice on the landowner to do something in such instances.

Mr. Sam Waide, Chief Executive, RSA, said: "We are calling on all landowners across the country to be aware of the impact that overgrown hedgerows can have on themselves and on other road users. They can cause a road safety hazard that could potentially result in loss of life or serious injury to yourself, a member of your family, or another member of your community."

On behalf of local authorities, John McLaughlin, Chair of the County and City Management Association Climate Action, Transport, Circular Economy, and Networks Committee said: "Local authorities have an obligation to ensure roadside verges are maintained and that local road safety issues should be prioritised, whilst also recognising the commitments under directives to preserve hedgerows and promote biodiversity. Equally, landowners and anyone living along the roadside has a responsibility to check that hedges or trees on their property are not causing a road safety hazard. If they are, the landowners should take the necessary steps needed to ensure road safety. We are also calling on members of the public to report road safety issues caused by overgrowth to their local authority, which can then contact the landowner."

## Brady calls for prevention of further delays in introduction of new bus routes

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed huge frustration at the announcement of further delays in the introduction of the new L14 bus route which was designed to service Southern Cross Road-Bray-Palermo.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) had previously given a timeline which would have seen the introduction of the L14 service in the middle of last year. The NTA have now informed Brady that the route will not be introduced until this coming summer at the earliest. In 2022 the NTA announced that the L14 would be one of a number of new bus routes in Wicklow.

Deputy Brady said: "I have been lobbying the NTA repeatedly over the last number of years in relation to the need for an increase in the number of bus service routes throughout Wicklow. And have previously made submissions as part of the BusConnects Consultation process for a new loop bus service around Bray.

The new L14 loop service would operate between the Southern Cross Road, Putland Road, Meath Road and Palermo. Another loop service was to be established between Greystones, Newcastle, Kilcoole and Newtownmountkennedy. This route was something Sinn Féin had campaigned for since 2017. Of all the routes announced in 2022, none have been delivered.

"I had previously been informed that the L14 would be up and running in the middle of last year," continued Deputy Brady.

"Since then, I have been in contact with the NTA on a regular basis seeking regular briefings and updates. The most recent update states that the L14 route will not be up and running until this

coming summer at the earliest.

And this all comes with the caveat that funding will be provided on time and a public consultation process will be complete along with the erection of necessary bus stops.

"We are already in February, and I do not believe that there is sufficient time to meet the requirements which must be addressed before the route can commence this summer. This leaves me with huge concerns that the new timeline will fall the way of previous timelines and not be met.

"Further delays will lead to even more anger and frustration, particularly in Bray where there is chronic traffic congestion, and the need for the new route must be met immediately."

Cllr Mick Ryan added:



John Brady TD

"At a time when the government should be taking concrete action to address the crippling issue of congestion in Bray, this is inexcusable. The people of Bray demand better. We have been promised a modern and efficient public transport service. We need to see it. These delays are not acceptable, and I think we are well within our rights to demand action from the Minister."

Cllr Dermot O'Brien

added: "Time after time we are presented with plans and proposals that are going to transform our transport system for the 'better'. It feels like there's a higher chance of seeing tumbleweed making its way through Bray than the real-life manifestation of the notions that come from those in power when it comes to public transport. Plenty of bells and whistles but not much tangible outcomes."

Deputy Brady concluded: "We need assurances that these routes can be put in place in time. The traffic congestion in Bray is a serious problem. We have heard a lot of talk from the Green Party in relation to the importance of the delivery of public transport. But, yet again we are witnessing more delays. I am calling on the Green Party Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan to intervene directly to ensure the deadline for the L14 is met."



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

#### Road to be closed

From the Junction of R753 and R747 (Aughrim Bridge).

Glen Road, Chapel Lane and Rednagh Road, Aughrim.

#### Period of closure

From 11:00 am to 12:30 pm Sunday 17th March, 2024.

#### Alternative Routes

R747 – Divert at Annacurra to Rednagh Road.

R753 – Divert to R747 at Cronebeg.

#### Reason for Closure

This closure is to facilitate the St. Patrick's Day parade.

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, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at [roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 20th February, 2024.

## ‘Accelerate a cap on hospital parking charges’

Following his calls to expedite a cap on his loyal parking charges, Green TD Steven Matthews has welcomed the establishment of a working group in the Department of Health which will develop a national policy on the introduction of a cap on hospital parking charges.

The Programme for Government commits to introducing a maximum daily car parking charge for patients and visitors at all public hospitals. Following the submission of a parliamentary question to the Minister for Health on this issue, Deputy Steven Matthews said: "I am calling for an accelerated timeline to cap parking charges in all public hospitals. The existing situation is not fair for those suffering with chronic illnesses or for their friends and families who accompany them to various hospital visits. The cost of parking is extremely high, and for those that may have to visit hospital more than once a week and often for a significant amount of time, this puts an undue financial burden on them. This leads to additional worry

and stress at a time when a patient's focus should be on their health.

"I welcome the establishment of a working group in the Department of Health which will issue recommendations for the introduction of a cap on parking charges at all public hospitals. This measure is urgently needed and should be introduced as soon as possible. We need to take a compassionate approach in addressing this issue and do our utmost to relieve the stress experienced by those attending hospital appointments. Ultimately, capping hospital charges would not cost much in the scheme of things but would help to reduce the financial burden experienced by patients and their families, as well as voluntary groups that operate pickup and drop off services for patients."



Steven Matthews TD



# Bray's Fran O'Toole bridge to benefit from 100K funding



Cllr Erika Doyle

**Councillor Erika Doyle has welcomed confirmation of €100k funding from the NTA for the Bray Bridge active travel improvements.**

Cllr Doyle said, "It's very welcome to see funding announced for active travel measures for the Fran O'Toole bridge. The bridge is a wonderful symbol of Bray and a valuable piece of local built heritage, construction of which began in 1865. Having been built to cater for traffic of the day it is very much limited by capacity. The construction

of two new bridges alongside the Fran O'Toole bridge to allow pedestrians and cyclists across safely will benefit not only those using active travel, but cars and buses too.

"Overall I'm disappointed that Bray has no new NTA projects planned for this year. Record funding is available from central government for active travel and local authorities should

be taking advantage of the Green Party led funding by completing as many projects as possible, while it is there.

"However the funding for the upgrade of the Fran O'Toole bridge is good news regardless and another step towards improving safe active travel options for the people of Bray. I look forward to the design team presenting councillors with an update in the coming months and will be sure to keep people updated."

## No lauding 'snails pace progress' on bottle deposit scheme

**Aontú local election candidate for Bray Ciaran Hogan has called for temper on celebrations around the new Re-turn bottle deposit scheme.**

"While I'm glad that this system is being brought to Ireland, it is disappointing that it took so long. More than 10 years ago when I visited beautiful Düsseldorf Germany, they had the same system, called pfand, up and running for many years. In fact Germany have had it running since 2002, more than 20 years, and that's not even the first. We're far behind the pack on this issue. Sweden, Korea, Iceland and Denmark have had bottle refund legislation since the mid 80's! Norway, Finland, Austria, and Belgium followed in the

90's. Many more jumped on in the early 2000's," claimed Mr.Hogan

"Ireland had the world's first deposit return scheme in 1799, 225 years ago. A & R Thwaites & Co in Dublin, announced the provision of artificial 'soda water' and that they paid 2 shillings a dozen for returned bottles. And more recently Lidl Ireland have been running their own Deposit return scheme since September 2021. In both cases it was a voluntary move by a private company, not by regulation.

"Clearly it wasn't money

that held back the rollout, the price tag for implementing the system is rumored to be between €27.5m up to €50m, but government parties have been splashing cash on other feel good projects since the 80's and long before that. It wasn't public opinion holding us back either, in 2013 a poll carried by Coastwatch on 1,426 adults and children over 10 found that 89 percent were positive about such a proposal, Nor was government wary of using large legislative measures to enact social change, as with the smoking ban, and plastic bag levy,



Ciaran Hogan

2004, 2002 respectively. "I am very familiar with the system as I have used it in Germany and elsewhere. So I can see it being a great success if it's executed properly but snails pace progress is not something to celebrate. A

few potential difficulties are; queues at the return machines, adding extra lorries to the streets to collect these bottles, some shops not opting into the scheme, the extra burden on shops managing these machines, and I'm sure many others will crop up during rollout if they have't been addressed in the planning stages.

"A consistent problem in Ireland is career politicians who don't have capacity or willpower to get anything done except in election years. We clearly need new faces and energy in Dail Eireann, local councils, and Brussels to get things done, That's why I'm running in the local elections for Aontú."

## Matthews slams lack of action on school bus services for Ashford

**Green TD Steven Matthews has criticised the failure of Bus Eireann and the Department of Education to provide school transport on the B9212 Route from Ashford Village to three schools in Wicklow Town.**



Deputy Matthews in Ashford

The 53 students impacted attend Colaiste Chill Mhantain, Dominican College Wicklow and East Glendalough School. Deputy Matthews has been in frequent contact since the summer with the Area Manager for Bus Eireann, who confirmed that while it is under review, there is no solution at this time.

Expressing the need for reforms to the school transport system, Deputy Matthews said: "It is completely unacceptable that more than 50 children in Ashford have been left without school transport this year. This is an incredibly frustrating situation and I have been in regular contact with the Area Manager for Bus Eireann in an attempt to resolve this issue. I attended a meeting in Moneystown at the start of the school year and parents and local TDs received various assurances from Bus Eireann that this route was being urgently assessed.

"We are now closer to the end of the school year than the start and yet the B9212 route remains unresolved. I am fully aware of the challenges that Bus Eireann are facing in terms of recruitment of bus drivers. However, we are now in February and it is no longer reasonable to use that as an excuse, particularly at a time when there is unprecedented funding for the School Transport Scheme.

"There are genuine concerns amongst parents, which I fully understand, that this route will not be resolved before the end of the school year and potentially into next year. The additional hassle and stress this puts on parents and families, not to mention the huge number of unnecessary additional cars on the road every day, is totally unacceptable.

"I will continue to engage with the Minister for Education and Bus Eireann on this issue and emphasise the need to prioritise a resolution for this route and to ensure that all Wicklow school routes are confirmed with drivers and buses in place well in advance of the new school year in September," Deputy Matthews concluded.



John Bermingham, Anne Mourdaunt and Jimmy Russell at the Hurry to the Curry event in the Arklow Bay Hotel for the Arklow RNLI.



**COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

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

#### Road to be closed

From the exit at the Roundabout on the R772 at Yellow Lane; Liam Mellows Avenue; The Navvy Hill; Abbey Street; Back Street; Lower Main Street; Main Street, ending at the Junction at St. Mary's Road, Arklow.

#### Period of closure

From 1:30pm to 3:00pm Sunday 17th March, 2024.

#### Alternative Routes

Access from Collins Street, Connolly Street Griffith Street via St. Mary's Road to Upper Main Street.

Access from Abbeyville; Abbey Heights; Abbey Park, Church View, Rory O'Connor Place via Harbour Court, turning left at Tinahask Lower, turn right to South Green towards South Quay, Turn left towards R772, turning right onto Bridge.

Alternative route for Traffic accessing South of the town will be via Junction 21 (South) M11.

Traffic Management will be in place for the duration of the parade.

#### Reason for Closure

To facilitate the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

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, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow or via email at [roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 20th February, 2024.





Catherine Kinsella of Salt Rock Dairy and Lorraine Aspill of Daisy Cottage Farm at the St. Brigid's Day celebrations at Powerscourt Distillery.

# 'Wicklow Women 4 Women' group to hold public information meeting

Wicklow Women 4 Women are a collective of local women who met in November 2022 at a conference organised by Women's Space Ireland. On February 22nd at 7:30pm they're holding an information meeting in The Glenview Hotel to discuss the Constitutional changes in the upcoming referendum on March 8th. They invite people to come along and meet them.

"We met on our way home and discovered we all shared similar views on the importance of women's and children's rights, based on the reality of sex and biology," they explain.

"Fired up by the conference we were determined to start an open discussion locally about topics that were being silenced in mainstream media. We held our first public meeting in January 2023 where we invited speakers to discuss upcoming changes to the SPHE curriculum. These changes mean that children will be taught that the subjective feeling of gender trumps the reality of biological sex. The meeting was very well attended.

"We started to connect with other women who were as dismayed as us by the Government and our institutions moving towards replacing all references based on biological sex - woman, mother - with gender neutral language."

At their upcoming meeting the group will explain why, as passionate supporters of women's rights, they will be voting No in the referendum.

"As it stands, the Constitution endeavours to ensure that the State will support women financially to carry out work necessary to society such as child-rearing and caring for our elderly that women do in our homes and elsewhere. That it has hardly done so is a mark against the State and its obligations. About 95% of this family care work is provided by women.

"The proposed new wording puts the burden of care firmly back on the family - or the impossible to define 'durable relationship' - and removes all mention of State financial support in providing this.

"Article 41.2 is the basis for a case currently under consideration by the Supreme Court in which a mother is fighting for her entitlement to full Carers' Allowance for looking after her disabled son."

## Aontú Wicklow to hold public meeting in Royal Hotel - next Monday 19th February

Aontu Wicklow have announced a Public meeting to be held in the Royal hotel on Monday 19th February, with Aontu leader Peadar Toibin, European candidate Patrick Murphy and Local Wicklow Rep Ciaran Hogan to be speaking. All are welcome to attend. The Main focus of the public meeting will be Cost of living, Housing and healthcare.

"Irish people have been hammered by a skyrocketing rise in the cost of living. For some time, we were paying the highest price for electricity in Europe at 49.9c/KWH, where the European average was 28.40c/KWH. The rising cost of groceries and necessities has for many doubled in only two years," explains Aontu Bray local election candidate Ciaran Hogan.

"Government mismanagement is driving more and more Irish citizens into poverty and insecure futures. Nearly 20% of people are living in poverty due to rising housing costs and increasing prices from fuel to groceries. Hundreds of thousands of people are in arrears on electricity and gas bills. Yet, Aontú research has found out that the government are taking more money on tax and fuel than ever before in a cost-of-living crisis. These are not the actions of a government that cares for struggling families. Aontú will cut taxes on energy and fuel in a cost of living crisis.

"Last year 115,000 patients across the country left A&Es without being seen. That's 115,000 people who were sick enough to warrant going to the A&E but were forced to wait so long that they walked out without treatment! Locally, we have lost Loughlinstown hospital A&E which puts further strain on anyone who needs emergency services, and will add to already chronic overcrowding at other A&E facilities."

Mr Hogan said he will fight for the best possible health care provisions, work to cut through administration and bureaucratic road-blocks that waste tax money and slow the care process to a crawl.

"Wicklow is a beautiful county, with fantastic people from every background and with great potential for growth. But, right now we are squandering that due to terrible planning and governance. North Wicklow is becoming little more than a commuter belt for Dublin, while South Wicklow is often forgotten."

Mr Hogan says he will be an avid campaigner for bringing diverse businesses, culture, and better transport infrastructure to the area. "In turn, this will allow more Wicklow residents to remain in our county and alleviate problems such as traffic congestion for commuters, time away from family, and allow more choices in local shopping," he says.

"The basis for any society is the family, and the family home. It has been proven time and time again, that there is no substitute for a loving family, with the stability of a roof over their head. The governance of Ireland has failed the Irish people with housing crisis after crisis for decades. In the middle of our current crisis when young Irish people think the idea of ever affording a house is unrealistic, it was Peadar Tóibín TD who brought to light the shocking statistic that there are over 3,544 houses in local authorities throughout the country that are boarded up. There are 175 empty Council houses in Wicklow. It's taking 8 months to turn these homes around and relet them, while in the private sector, rentals are



Ciaran Hogan

turned around within 3 weeks. Hundreds of families are without a home due to government inefficiencies. Shockingly there are now 4,517 on the Wicklow housing list! It should be a priority of any government to ensure that everyone that needs a house has appropriate accommodation."



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

**Road to be closed**  
R750 Main Street, Wicklow Town, from the junction at Station Road to Market Square.

**Period of closure**  
2.30pm until 6:00pm Sunday 17th March 2024.

**Alternative Routes**  
**From R750:** left onto Port access road (R999) over the bridge turning left onto South Quay.

**From Castle Street:** Turn right onto Castle Street, left onto Quarantine Hill, right onto South Quay.

**Reason for Closure**  
This closure is to facilitate the St. Patrick's Day parade.

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, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at [roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 20th February, 2024.



Joanna Kidney, Kevin O'Byrne, Joan Davis, Theresa Nanigan, Colm Keegan and Philip St.John at the Wicklow Artists Salon in the Mermaid Theatre, Bray.





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- MJ Music Production
- MK Music Performance
- MF Sound Engineering
- MN Traditional Irish and Folk Music Performance

COMPUTING & ENGINEERING

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- NC Computer Networks and Cyber Security
- ND Computer A+ Operating Systems
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- FD Nail Technician & Salon Administration
- FC Fashion Theatre and Media Make-Up

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- HK Science - Pre-University
- HZ Food Science with Dietetics - Pre-University
- JF Pharmacy Assistant
- JJ Pharmacy Technician
- HU Applied Ecology and Biodiversity Studies
- LJ Brewing and Distilling Technology

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- JB E Business
- JC Business Management - Advanced Certificate
- JD Accounting Technician
- LD Business Tourism Advanced Certificate
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- SF Medical Administration (Mornings Only)
- SE IT & Office Administration (Mornings Only)
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- LE Culinary Arts Advanced
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- LI Hospitality & Business Management (Level 6)

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- MG Games Development

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- ZD IPO medical Computer Assistant (Level 5)



# Kildare & Wicklow school leaders call for more deputy principals to tackle disadvantage

Principals in ETB post primary schools with DEIS designation, at their national conference this week. Over 300 delegates were joined by Dr Katriona O'Sullivan, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Science in Maynooth University, and bestselling author of 'Poor',

Principals, "and relationships require time and space. The allocation of more Deputy Principals can transform a school, freeing up school leaders to support students and teachers develop relationships where talent can shine."

Paddy Lavelle, General Secretary of Education and Training Boards Ireland agrees: "ETBs have the highest proportion of DEIS post-primary schools in the country, 129 in total, and their young people need and deserve adequate supports. The Deputy Principal role is a crucial one: the high administrative burden placed on Principals means the Deputy

Principal is, typically, the staff-member available to identify challenges or risks for the student body or individual students; to provide support to students experiencing difficulties; to keep a watching eye on at-risk students and to liaise with other support services to ensure all students get the care and attention they need."

"We are appealing to the Department to increase the allocation by between .5 and 1 Deputy Principal per school, depending on its size\* and believe this will make a significant impact on outcomes for our learners, some of whom are the most vul-

nerable young people in Irish society. From the feedback we've received from our Principals, this increase will help relieve the administrative burden and free them up for a greater focus on Teaching and Learning, providing increased support for student support and wellbeing, and professional support for their teachers.

This year's ETBI Principals and Deputy Principals Conference was also addressed by Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children and Prof Selina McCoy, Associate Research Professor ESRI. Delegates also attended workshops on meeting the challenges of vaping,



Director of Schools in Kildare and Wicklow Ken Scully is pictured with Gwen Campbell, Maria Lynch and Damien Cloney, at the ETBI Principals and Deputy Principals Conference in Portlaoise. Pic: PJ McCormack

## €84m to enhance Research and Innovation opportunities

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD has announced €84 million to enhance research and innovation opportunities for the Technological University sector. The programme will establish, equip, and staff regional research and innovation offices within TUs to enable deepened engagement with local and regional business, industry, and enterprise stakeholders.

IADT will receive €3.6m and SETU will receive €13.6m. The funding will also be

directed at developing researcher human capital in the technological sector, including staff devel-

opment, recruitment, post-graduate training and supervision, networking, and collaborative knowl-

edge-transfer and mobility schemes.

Minister Harris said: "I am very pleased to

announce, with the assistance of the European Regional Development Fund, the allocation of almost €84 million in funding to our five TUs as well as to Dundalk Institute of Technology and Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology.

"The Technological Universities are uniquely placed to link with local and regional enterprises, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises, to support them to turn innovation opportunities into real-world actuality.

"TUs are catalysts of regional development and support the skills and employment agendas regionally and nationally. This significant research-oriented funding will further enhance their capacity in this regard, ensuring that as a nation Ireland will be recognised as a world-leader in Research and Innovation for years to come."

TU RISE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the Southern, Eastern & Midland and the Northern & Western Regional Programmes, 2021-27.

This follows the Minister's announcement in December of funding of €15 million for research equipment across the higher education sector under the Higher Education Research Equipment Grant, some €3.7 million of which was allocated to the technological sector.

That funding will help higher education institutions purchase and upgrade world-leading research equipment that will serve the research, innovation and development needs of Irish researchers and enterprise collaborators over the next two years. It will support vital research activity across the sector while also building future capacity in R&D.

Chief Executive of the Higher Education Authority, which will manage the operations of the TU RISE scheme, Dr Alan Wall, said: "Funding under TU RISE comes at a critical juncture in the development of the technological sector. This funding offers institutions the opportunity to enhance central research functions, which are critical to institutions strategically developing and achieving their research ambitions. Investment in staff and researchers in individual disciplines at Faculty level offers institutions an important opportunity to build expertise in research areas that will facilitate stronger engagement with regional enterprises aligned to Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Regional Enterprise Plans.

"The HEA conceived, designed and will manage this investment to support our TUs contribution to a bottom-up, place-based, dynamic process which brings together regional and national actors to link



Minister Simon Harris

Ireland's regional needs and potential with innovative policymaking."

Welcoming the Scheme, the Cathaoirleach of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Cllr John Naughten said: "The TU RISE Scheme is another positive instance of European Funding, delivered by the EU co-funded Regional Programmes to assist the technological sector in enhanced engagement with businesses and stakeholders in the regions. This is a fantastic opportunity to develop much needed researcher human capital in the regions, which is one of the most pressing challenges facing the Northern and Western region."

Cllr Terry Shannon, Cathaoirleach of the Southern Regional Assembly, which is ERDF Managing Authority for the Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional

Programme said: "The technological universities play a critical role in supporting regional development and innovation. TU RISE will complement wider investment, including significant investment under the ERDF Regional Programmes, in building research, development and innovation capacity in HEIs and in SMEs throughout the regions."

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to strengthen economic, social, and territorial cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions.

The objectives of the fund are to create a competitive and smarter Europe, a greener transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe, and a Europe closer to citizens by fostering sustainable and integrated development at a regional level.

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# Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders: Kildare & Wicklow students begin their term as ISSU Regional Officers

Aoibhe Toft, 5th year student from Cross and Passion College, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare and Jason Tamayo, TY student from Woodbrook College, Bray, have been elected as the ISSU Regional Officers for the Kildare-Wicklow region. Jason Tamayo has also been re-elected for the position and has been involved in the Regional Officer Body since 2023. The Irish Second-Level Students' Union, known as ISSU is the national representative body for second-level students.



Aoibhe Toft, 5th year student from Cross and Passion College, Kilcullen

he officers were elected to the Regional Officer Body (ROB) by member schools from Kildare-Wicklow schools last November at Regional Councils in Liberty Hall, Dublin. They began their term on January 1st, 2024 and will work alongside each other for the year ahead. They will work alongside the Coiste GnÚ (CG), Monitoring & Advisory Committee (MAC), and Regional Officer colleagues in which they will attend events, consultations, lobbying governments, and more!

Jason and Aoibhe have spent the last month training for the start of their new position. Jason and Aoibhe have been working together since January 1st, along with 35 other ISSU Regional Officers. This is Aoibhe's first term while this is Jason's second term as Regional Officers, and they are both eager to get started

on issues affecting students within County Kildare and Wicklow.

"The reason why I ran again for a second term was because I saw the issues that are being faced by students and I wanted to make a bigger difference than last term. I only completed a small portion of my regional project which was mental health and the stress of exam years and I wanted to do more than that. As part of the Asian community, I strongly believe that racism and discrimination is a major issue not only in my community but is a national issue and I hope to work alongside the Equality Officer to ensure that the discrimination is not a thing," Jason commented.

"I ran for Regional Officer this year because I want to ensure that students in all areas are represented. I come from a rural village where I hadn't heard of ISSU until



Jason Tamayo, TY student from Woodbrook College



Wicklow & District Lions Club has become the first Lions Club in Ireland to form its own Leo group. Young Lions Sorcha O'Neill, Karla McEvoy and Lilly O'Donoghue and supporters from the Dominican College, Wicklow Town, with Sean Olohan and Ethna Neiland of Wicklow & District Lions Club. The Leo club aims to empower young leaders. On Thursday 1st February 20 students from Dominican College were presented with their Leo Badges. They young Leos are already making plans for activities, competitions and fundraising events.

our school became a member, and so I want every student in Kildare and Wicklow to experience the benefits. Over my time in school I have realised that as young people we face a huge problem with xenophobia, racism, and homophobia. During our term I hope to work with Officers for Welfare and Equality to create healthier, safer environments for our students," said Aoibhe.

Aoibhe and Jason would like to thank the

Kildare and Wicklow students for electing them as their representatives. Throughout their tenure, the Regional Officers seek to work with local politicians, organisations, and councillors, as well as represent the over 10,000 second-level students in Kildare and Wicklow on a regional and national level. Jason and Aoibhe plan to make sure student voices are heard at the local level this year.

"We will be addressing subjects such as anti-bul-

lying campaigns, discrimination within our local areas, free period products for all students, and more.

The two strongly invite any local students, politicians, organisations, or councillors to contact them to help forward the cause of student representation in Kildare and Wicklow. Students can contact the representatives by emailing [kildarewicklow@issu.ie](mailto:kildarewicklow@issu.ie) or visiting the ISSU website at [www.issu.ie](http://www.issu.ie)



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

### Road to be closed

R762 Mill Road and Church Road, Greystones, Co Wicklow.

### Period of closure

From 10.30 am to 12.30 pm, Sunday 17th March, 2024.

### Alternative Routes

R761 Killincarrig Village and Lower Kindlestown Road.

### Reason for Closure

This is to facilitate the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

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, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at [roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 20th February, 2024.



# Wicklow teacher traces his surname in new series

Wicklow-based secondary school teacher Seán Ó Suilleabháin has been featured in Irish heritage with Sloinne, a new seven-part series on TG4. The series delves into the fascinating stories behind Ireland's most common surnames, bringing.



Seán Ó Suilleabháin and Niamh Ní Shuilleabháin

The first series showcases surnames like O Flaithearta, O Murchu, O Ceallaigh, O Suilleabhain, O Domhnaill, Seoighe, and O Conchubhair. Sloinne paints a colourful picture of how our local areas and surnames are deeply intertwined.

The rugged landscapes of West Cork, where the O'Sullivans have left their mark, the historic tales of the O'Donnells echoing through the hills of Donegal, and the ancient lineage of the Joyces of Galway. Each episode features a special guest exploring their family surname, taking us on a journey back in time. We'll visit ancient strongholds tied to these names, reliving epic battles and feuds over land and possessions. From the famous to the infamous, modern-day stories

of surname bearers add a personal touch, highlighting our enduring connection to our ancestors.

In the Sunday 11th February episode of Sloinne, the programme followed Seán Ó Suilleabháin, a Wicklow-based secondary school teacher, as he goes on a journey back in time to trace the history of his surname and to find out about others with the same surname.

His journey began in Rathmines, Dublin, as he traced back through five generations of O'Sullivans. Sean met Pat Sweeney, a pharmacist in Roches Pharmacy (Dublin) who worked with his father for many years, composer Karen Ní Bhroin, who tells him all about Arthur Sullivan (composer) and also Séamas O Maitiu (writer and historian) who explains all about the life



Paul Mac Cotter and Seán Ó Suilleabháin at Wynns Hotel

of nurse Maureen O'Sullivan to him. He also visited Dr Catherine Healy (historian) at the EPIC museum, Dublin to look at the story of Maureen O'Sullivan, the actress.

Sean's journey inevitably takes him to Co. Cork. Anne McNally (historian) meets him at the ruins of Dunboy Castle

(Beara peninsula) where he learns about the O'Sullivan clan leader in 1602 - Dúnal Cam O'Sullivan. He ends back in Skibbereen where his own family lived over a 100 years ago.

The episode also features conversations with John O'Sullivan (historian, Co. Cork), Sinead Ní Uallachain (Ballineanig,

County Kerry), Niamh Ní Shuilleabhain and Paul MacCotter (series genealogist).

The next episode features Hannah Ní Dhomhnaill, who is originally from the Donegal Gaeltacht, who goes on a journey to find out more about the surname O'Donnell.

## Romeo & Juliet

Whale Theatre, Friday – Sunday, 23 – 25 February.  
Tickets €15 at [whaletheatre.ie](http://whaletheatre.ie)

Celebrating the fifth anniversary of their very first production, Making Waves Youth Theatre is delighted to announce and invite you to attend their upcoming spectacular production of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet on at the Whale Theatre, Greystones!

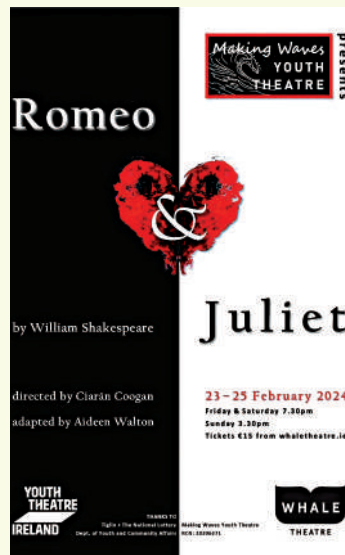
Founded in 2018 by Ciarán Coogan and Aileen Walton, the newly formed Making Waves Youth Theatre performed Juliet of Verona (adapted from Romeo and Juliet and directed by Ciarán Coogan) in February 2019 at the Whale Theatre. At that time, with just ten regular members and two volunteer facilitators, the future of the group was unclear. But since then, Making Waves has gone from strength to strength, expanded its team and membership and established itself as a fabulous resource for young people in Greystones and its environs – even prevailing through the Covid period through Zoom workshops. Now, over 150 workshops, six productions and many exciting collaborations later, Making Waves Youth Theatre has a lot to celebrate!

To mark this special anniversary, Making Waves Youth Theatre is once again performing Shakespeare's classic tale of star-crossed lovers, this time with a 35-strong cast of young people aged from 12 to 19 years. First performed over 426 years ago, Romeo and Juliet is not only one of the world's greatest love stories, but its timeless themes of prejudice and tribal conflict are so relevant to our own time. Join us and be transported by an evening of romance, comedy, drama and, of course, the sheer magic of Shakespeare's words.

Directed by Ciarán Coogan and

adapted by Aileen Walton, and fittingly, with three of the original Making Waves members on the team – Katie Lacey-Curtis (Assistant Director), Archer Bradshaw (Lighting) and Cíara Short (Music & Sound) – this fifth anniversary production is a celebration on so many levels.

A community initiative and registered charity, Making Waves Youth Theatre is an inclusive theatre group for teenagers, generously sponsored by Ross McParland and the Whale Theatre and supported by Tiglin.



## First-of-its-kind Irish food film from Arklow chef

The premiere of Wicklow Chef, Tadhg Byrne and Dublin Filmmaker, Max Barry's Film 'Dinner 2050: Future of Food in Ireland' took place recently in UCD. This is the first film ever made about the future of food in Ireland.

The one-hour documentary explores how Ireland will eat in 2050 – looking at issues such as how technology will change farming, food security, robot chefs, drone deliveries and sustainability in the food supply chain and is due to reach a large audience in 2024.

The film features key players from the Irish food industry such as Brian O'Toole from Wildacres Nature Reserve, Redcross, Lynda Douglas from Ballynerrin Free Range Eggs, Wicklow Town, Jim Callery, Climate Action Officer at Wicklow County Council, Tom Burgess, Dairy farmer and Award Winning Cheese maker from Coolatin, and Margaret Hootor, lamb Farmer From Kilmullen Farm. It is narrated by Irish Celebrity Chef Catherine Fulvio.

Speaking on the reception so far to the film, Byrne has said "The fact that so many people with high-powered jobs have been willing to give up their time to be in the film and the many encouraging emails we have had, reminds me this is a very important project and I think it will be well received nationwide".

Commenting on the importance of the film JP McMahon said "Food affects every single aspect of our lives. If we don't look at the how, why and

where our food is coming from, then we lose control of that food".

Irish filmmaker Max Barry, who to direct the project, expressed the importance of the film:

"When Tadhg came to me with the idea I was very excited to help develop the project. As supply issues, inflation, climate change and war in Europe continue to cause instability, how we will grow, process, market and eat our food in the future is something that needs to be highlighted. With his film, I hope to shed light on how food ends up on our plate in Ireland."



Tadhg Byrne (right) behind the scenes filming Dinner 2050 - Future of Food in Ireland





# Wicklow filmmaker features on Lyric FM's 'Where Life Sounds Greener'

Wicklow-based filmmaker, Alan Gilsenan recently featured on RTE Lyric FM's Where Life Sounds Greener segments, which introduced listeners to some extraordinary people who are driven by their love of nature.



Alan Gilsenan

Where Life Sounds Greener, which launched on Thursday, February 1st, consisted of greetings from creators across the country, who shared their connection with the natural world and impart a piece of music that inspires this connection to listeners. The segments ran for one week.

Multi-award-winning filmmaker, Alan has an almost spiritual connection with the natural world and rejoices in the renewed life that spring delivers. His festival in Wicklow, The Shaking Bog, celebrates the environment in all its beauty and the constant inspiration to be found there for everyone to enjoy.

Where Life Sounds Greener coincided with St. Brigid's Day which marks the first day of spring. Each contributor values the power of music and the arts to motivate, encourage and inspire connection with the natural world at a time when we need it most. Other contributors included Cathy Davey who sings songs to her rescued horses and pigs, photographer Tina Claffey who captures minute bog universes through her lens, and Sam Lee who sings with the nightingales.



Susanna Braswell and adjudicator Alan Howley make a presentation to Hilda Roche of Ashford ICA at the recent ICA Wicklow Federation 68th Drama Festival in Glenealy.

# Making Waves at Mermaid

22nd - 23rd February, 10:15am & 12:15pm. €9 Full Price. This event is for schools. Carers / teachers tickets are complimentary. Duration: Show Duration 30 mins + 15 mins sensory play - total 45 mins

Making Waves is an immersive multi-sensory dance theatre performance designed specifically for disabled children & young people aged 8 to 13 years with mild to complex needs.



This magical sea voyage sets sail in search of hidden treasure and along the way encounters rolling waves, sparkling fish and swooping gulls. Designed to be inclusive, audience members are seated in pods representing boats on stage, enabling everyone to become part of the adventure. The specially designed boats are suitable for wheelchair users.

A magical sea voyage in which the audience and performers set sail in search of hidden treasure. Join the adventure and be transported by the ebb and flow of the ocean through gentle soothing currents and on into the dynamic rhythmic beat of crashing waves.

Meet the school of fluorescent

fish and see the swooping gulls. Let the wind fill your sails and carry you along accompanied by a sensitively evocative sound score written by composer Stefan French.

The audience is greeted by the performers in the theatre foyer, invited into the performance space and guided to their seats in the boats. These pods are suitable for wheelchair users.

Tickets include: an in-school workshop, teachers resource pack and ticket to the theatre show.

Schools Workshops take place in schools in the days prior to the live show in venues. Both activities happen in the same week.

Workshop length: 1 hour. Please note that this show is for schools.

# Theatre at Mermaid: Unguarded

Written & Performed by Anthony Kinahan.  
Directed by Anna Simpson

Mermaid Arts Centre, Wednesday 14th February, 8pm. €18 Full Price. €16 Concession Price.  
Duration: 75 mins (no interval)

When a father's world falls apart, he must battle through obstacles to ensure a future for him & his son. Love; Laughter; Loss & Families left behind: UNGUARDED is a touching, & often comedic, new drama - developed by Louth actor/theatre-maker Anthony Kinahan - that uses imaginative physicality, vocal versatility & song, to highlight the vulnerable position many LGBTQ+ & non-LGBTQ+ families find themselves in due to the lack of regulation of Surrogacy in Ireland.

Developed under the Droichead Arts Centre Artist in Association in 2021 (& with the support of the Arts Council of Ireland), this production is produced by Droichead and An Táin Arts Centre, Dundalk.



Greystones Orchestra are delighted to return to The Mermaid Arts Centre for their annual winter concert on Saturday 17th February, 8pm. This year they will be joined by the internationally acclaimed Irish violinist Lynda O'Connor for a performance of one of the great works of the classical repertoire, Beethoven's Violin Concerto. The evening will also include performances of Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture and Wagner's Siegfried Idyll. The orchestra will be conducted by Cillian O'Breachain, in his first appearance of the 2023/2024 season. €22.50 Full Price. €17.50 Concession Price. Concession price is for under 18s and full-time students



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

### Roads to be closed

Main Street Rathdrum – R755 from the Junction at Parnell Memorial Park to the Junction of L-97554 Lower Street.

### Period of closure

From 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm Sunday, 17th March 2024.

### Alternative Routes

RL-97554 – Lower Street, Rathdrum.

Traffic Management will be in place for the duration of the parade.

### Reason for Closure

To facilitate the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

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, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at [roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 20th February, 2024.



# Things Went T\*ts Up

An inspired and refreshingly honest book of poetry from the hearts of two breast cancer thrivers

'Things Went T\*ts Up' a book written by Offaly native Dearbhaile O'Hare and illustrated by Wicklow woman Jessica Pierce, who are both breast cancer thrivers - was officially launched in Cluster on Suffolk Street and is out now on Amazon and at [www.thingswenttitsup.ie](http://www.thingswenttitsup.ie).

This is a book of poetry and illustrations created from the hearts of two breast cancer thrivers, who the universe very serendipitously brought together. In Dearbhaile's words "A little slice of 'Meraki'; a Greek word to do something with soul, creativity, and love; putting a piece of yourself into what you do" was officially launched on Saturday 27th of January with a special private event.

Jessica Pierce is an illustrator and a student graphic designer based in Wicklow. Working across many mediums, Jessica loves to solve problems creatively and bring a vision to life. Tackling the subject of cancer has been personal for her and she hopes to have captured some of the chaos and emotional turmoil of a positive diagnosis. Jessica is now cancer free and is feeling incredibly lucky to be pursuing her dream career.

Author Dearbhaile, who hails from Birr, said: "The theme of the book launch was simply



'thank you'. A celebration of thanks to all who helped us both professionally, medically and personally and to raise some money for two can-

cer charities in the process, paying it forward to those who so lovingly had our backs when we needed it the most."

'Things Went T\*ts Up'

is a powerful collection of refreshingly honest and raw poetry that speaks to the courage and strength of those affected by breast cancer. It features heartfelt reflections on the devastating journey of a cancer diagnosis, from treatment and recovery to rising and thriving, with the ultimate takeaway to keep going even in the darkest of days.

This is not just a book about breast cancer and raising awareness of cancer - it is a book striving to rise above challenges, no matter what life throws your way. It poignantly speaks to the strength of the human spirit, even when feeling crushed and afraid, and gives readers courage and comfort in the face of adversity.

Author Dearbhaile continued "Many of these poems lived as scrambled notes on my phone, scribbled down throughout the course of my treatment. On completion of my active treatment, I figured why not take a leap of faith and share them. The



Illustrator Jessica Pierce with author Dearbhaile O'Hare

hope is they will resonate and bring comfort and hope to anyone facing a cancer diagnosis, knowing they are not alone. The goal is that this book will show that following on from a cancer diagnosis, you can again thrive with empathy, humour and compassion, rising with resilience and again sparking like the diamond you are!"

'Things Went T\*ts Up' is a must-read for anyone

affected by breast cancer, whether personally or through a loved one. It is an invaluable resource to help understand a cancer journey and find the courage to fight with a few laughs, tears and no doubt many choice words not to be repeated.

Speaking about her role in creating the book, illustrator Jessica Pierce said "It has been an absolute privilege to work on this book with Dearbhaile. Illustrating

her beautiful words has helped me through my own healing from breast cancer.

"If, through this book, we can make someone smile in recognition and feel seen through their own cancer diagnosis that will be the greatest achievement."

If someone in your life has been affected by cancer, 'Things Went T\*ts Up' is the perfect book to help support them, providing comfort and hope

in the face of such a devastating diagnosis.

All profits from the sale of this book go to The Marie Keating Foundation and Purple House cancer charities, supporting those affected by cancer and their families.

The book is available in both paperback and kindle versions on Amazon. It can also be purchased from the website [www.thingswenttitsup.ie](http://www.thingswenttitsup.ie)

## Danny O'Brien - Sweet Child O'Brien

Whale Theatre, Thursday 15th and Friday 16th February, 8pm (doors 7pm) Tickets €22 and available at [www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie) or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for any returns.

After a complete sell-out nationwide tour including full houses at both The Whale Theatre and Bray Comedy Festival last year, multi-award-winning Wicklovian comedian Danny O'Brien is back in Greystones this February with a brand new nostalgia-packed high-energy stand-up show bringing the big laughs home to his native county!

O'Brien has revisited all the simple joys of a late 80s/early 90s Irish childhood (to find the undisputed winner!) and sought to find out if a simpler time was indeed a happier one.

This year he has toured all over the world, including a month-long tour around New Zealand, Canada & Newfoundland representing Ireland with various International TV appearances as well as several worldwide comedy festivals in Asia, Europe, the US, and a month of sell-out solo shows and rave reviews at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival (he also may



or may not have accidentally killed two Tamagotchis along the way!)

He has toured nationally with John Colley, Today FM's Dermot & Dave, and he also opened

for American comedian Bill Burr in front of over 8,000 people in Dublin's 3Arena!

He is also a regular contributor on Irish Television and Radio.

## Creative Wicklow grant scheme

Wicklow County Council invites applications under the Creative Wicklow Grant Scheme 2024. A total of €20,000.00 is available for this fund in 2024 and the closing date for receipt of submissions is Tuesday 19th March 2024.

This scheme has been designed to support Wicklow County Council's role in delivering the Creative Ireland Programme.

Now in its third year, this scheme is open to not-for-profit organisations, local community groups, arts, heritage, biodiversity and cultural groups, venues and societies.

Activities that effectively capture and showcase the richness of County Wicklow's arts, culture, creativity, heritage, nature, biodiversity, and history are welcomed. Applications by individuals must be in partnership with local community, arts, heritage, biodiversity and cultural groups.

Grants between €1,000 and €3,000 will be allocated to selected projects that com-

municate and celebrate aspects of Wicklow People and Place in creative and innovative ways. The applications will be assessed by members of Wicklow County Council's Culture Team with representation from the Heritage, Arts, Libraries and Archives departments.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, said: "Wicklow County Council aims to place creativity and culture at the heart of communities throughout Wicklow, recognising that creativity positively influences wellbeing, and community and economic success."

Wicklow County Council Chief

Executive, Emer O'Gorman stated: "We are delighted to be in a position to support the innovative projects that have earned Wicklow County Council recognition as a creative county, where local community groups showcase and celebrate the richness of county Wicklow's art and culture."

The Creative Ireland Programme is led by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The programme's core focuses in on encouraging participation in cultural and creative activity to promote individual, community and national wellbeing.

Applications must be made online at <https://wicklowcountycouncil.submittable.com/submit> by closing date Tuesday, 19th March 2024 at 4pm. For more information on Wicklow County Council's Creative Ireland initiatives see [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie)

## One-to-one coaching for artists

Wicklow County Council has announced the return of the Artist One-to-One Coaching Sessions. The application window opens on Tuesday, 6th February, and the deadline for submissions is Tuesday, 19th March, at 4pm.

These personalised coaching sessions offer artists a unique opportunity to engage in a profound process rooted in deep listening and active reflection. Designed to foster personal, professional, and artistic growth, the sessions provide a secure and open environment for artists to explore their

experiences, aspirations, and potential areas for development. Through this collaborative journey, participants can identify goals, create informed and sustainable plans, and gain the confidence to realise their strategies.

Open to artists at any career level, the initiative

aims to provide direction, energy, and creative resilience for those seeking positive change and growth in their artistic journey.

Past participants have praised the impact of the Artist One-to-One Coaching Sessions, with one expressing how it "helped to clear away the fog to see where I am and how I might proceed from here."

Another shared that the coaching "taught me how to set boundaries with my

time, recognise my worth as an artist, and find a new voice within my work."

This year's panel of coaches features the return of seasoned professionals: Katherine Zeserson, a strategic advisor, coach, facilitator, artist, and educator; Susan Coughlan, an independent facilitator, coach, and arts consultant; Helen Meany, arts writer, arts consultant, and coach; and Paula Phelan, arts consultant and founder of Traverso

Coaching and Training.

Applications are now open and interested artists are encouraged to submit their applications before the deadline for this invaluable opportunity to enrich their artistic journey. The coaching is free and subsidised by Wicklow County Council and the Arts Council.

Closing date for applications is Tuesday 19th March at 4pm. For more information and to apply, please visit [www.wicklowcoco.ie](http://www.wicklowcoco.ie)





Emma Jane Rushworth with Fantastic Mr Fox at the launch of the Made in Wicklow showcase.

# Colin Murphy - WHATCHAMACOLIN

Whale Theatre, Saturday 17th February, 8pm (doors 7pm) Sold Out but register for returns at [www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie) or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for any returns.

Colin Murphy's last tour Colinization was a sell out. Since then he has survived covid and a royal funeral... just. But in 2023 he's back out on the road with his biggest and best stand up tour yet, WHATCHAMACOLIN.

As well as starring in twenty series of the BBC's award winning ratings topper The Blame Game, hosting IMRO award nominated Great Unanswered Questions, acting in BAFTA winning People Like Us, being a team captain on panel show Clear History, over a hundred appearances on the hugely popular, multi IFTA award nominated show The Panel, plus hosting and co-writing six series of the cult classic show Blizzard of Odd on RTE, Colin has also taken his

stand up to all corners of the world. From Montreal, to Melbourne, New York, Edinburgh, Shanghai, Madrid and Strabane.

If you're a fan of the telly stuff then you'll love WHATCHAMACOLIN; a show full of pin perfect observations, self righteous indignation and a bit of swearing. To still be performing stand-up at this level after thirty years he must be doing something right.

Age Guidance: Over 18's



Colin Murphy

## Arts Office announces recipients of Strategic Projects Award

The Wicklow County Arts Office is pleased to announce the 10 recipients of the 11th edition of the Strategic Projects Award Scheme.

Open to a diverse range of applicants, including artists, national resource organisations, individual curators, and artist collectives, this year's scheme featured two funding streams and welcomed participants from various arts disciplines.

Funded by the Arts Council and Creative Ireland, the annual Strategic Project Award

Scheme recipients for 2024 are:

**Aine Stapleton** - 'When Life is Silent' - a short dance film that explores Monte Verita in Ascona, Switzerland. This life-reform colony holds historical significance for the development of early modern dance. The Strategic Projects Award will assist Aine in writing, choreographing, producing, and directing the film

which is set to premiere at the Mermaid Arts Centre in December 2024.

**Aisling Ennis** - 'The King of The Fairies,' an interactive concert and workshop series adapted for children by Aisling. The Strategic Projects Award will make possible the enchanting performances throughout Wicklow Libraries in 2024.

**Brian Murphy** - 'Perdu,' - a murder mystery web series that's set to captivate audiences with two five minute episodes set in Wicklow. Brian is producing the series and the Strategic Projects Award will support him in bringing this thrilling project to life.

**Eamon Sweeney** - 'Night-Light' (working title) is a new musical offering by Eamon, Anna Newell, and Malachy Robinson, focusing on lullabies, sleep, and dreams. The Strategic Projects Award will provide the necessary resources to create and test new material on young audiences and their parent/guardians.

**Signal Arts Centre** - 'Art at the Kitchen Table,' developed by Waterford Healing Arts Trust, aims to support older individuals in making art in their homes. The Strategic Projects Award will enable Signal Arts Centre artists to receive specialized training and mentoring for delivering the programme in County Wicklow.

**Eoin O'Malley** - 'TRACKS,' a collaborative wheel painting event led by artist Eoin in Baltinglass which will

bring creativity to the community in an inclusive and innovative way. The Strategic Projects Award will ensure the event reaches individuals of all ages and abilities.

**Grace O'Malley** - As 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the Glencree Peace and Reconciliation Centre, Grace will use the Strategic Projects Award to develop a script for a performance as part of the centre's anniversary celebrations.

**Kate Strain** - Kunstverein Aughrim, is a not-for-profit curatorial production office for contemporary art, where, through the support of the Strategic Project Award, Kate will lead a collabo-

ration of up to ten Wicklow-based creative practitioners to document Kunstverein Aughrim's artistic programme creatively.

**Robert Manson** - 'Ballyrogan House,' a 500-year-old farmhouse, will be the subject of a feature-length experimental art documentary by Robert supported by the Strategic Projects Award.

**The West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival** will deliver a family and education programme based on Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf,' expanding its annual education and outreach programme with the support of the Strategic Projects Award.

Cathaoirleach of Wick-

low County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, said she is "happy that funding of €102,555 has been awarded through the Strategic Project Award by the Council in 2024. This support empowers artists and creative practitioners to foster their craft, strengthen connections, foster fresh perspectives, and cultivate emerging voices within the community of County Wicklow."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, stated: "Wicklow County Council is pleased to fund well-considered proposals that offer creative solutions and tailor-made audience engagement programmes for the citizens of Wicklow."

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning permission sought for 59.6 sq m single storey extension to 50.3 sq m farm dwelling house, new on-site sewerage treatment system to serve dwelling house and all ancillary site works. Permission also sought for conversion of existing Dutch style hay shed to self catering agri-tourism accommodation, consisting of a two storey 3 bed room unit, and a single storey 2 bed room unit, conversion of old dairy to farm product workshop and conversion of old cattle shed to class room, 11 no. car parking spaces, new onsite sewerage treatment system to serve converted buildings. Alterations to existing entrance and all ancillary site works at Tober Lower, Dunlavin County Wicklow.

Signed Alice Blumlein  
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.  
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

Arc Design seeks Permission for retention on behalf of Gordon Harris & Trysha Fitzmaurice for the development at 85 The Briary, Blainroe, Wicklow Town, Wicklow A67 X624 which consists of Retention permission for partially constructed and permission for completion of same for: (a) Construction of 5sqm entrance porch. (b) Existing utility room to be converted into habitable office whilst raising flat roof to link in with new porch. (c) Rear side extension for office and Utility rooms.

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](http://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.

## Happy Valentine's Day

A poem by David P Carroll

It's Valentine's day and  
I'm thinking about my  
Special girl today  
And my heart beats  
Just for you and you know it's true  
And my eyes adore you  
And my love for  
You is so true and  
When I touch you  
I'm electrified and my heart  
Skips a beat and  
You are the oxygen that keeps  
me alive and  
You are my heart  
Beating inside me and  
You make me feel special  
And loved every day  
And without your kisses  
I cannot breath  
And in my arms  
is where you'll stay  
Kissing all night long and  
The beating of our hearts  
is my favourite love song.



### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Aisling & Aaron Jackson seek planning permission for: Attic Conversion including dormer window to front and dormer window to rear along with frosted window in existing gable wall of existing dwelling at 34 Archers Wood Drive, Archers Wood, Delgany, Co. Wicklow. A63 R729. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Stephen and Cathy Pearson seek planning permission for: Single Storey Extension to rear of existing dwelling along with alterations to existing roadside gated entrance at The Fallows, Ashtown Lane, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow A98 AK57. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application

## ATTENTION

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Liz Sheehan and Olivia Pennell celebrating St. Brigid's Day at Powerscourt Distillery.

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

• ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Salary: €55,519.00 – €77,176.00 (includes 2nd LSI)  
gross per annum

REF: 11/2024

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED  
APPLICATION FORMS IS THURSDAY 7TH MARCH 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](mailto:recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie) and on the Wicklow County Council website [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie)

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

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Director Of Services,  
Enterprise & Corporate Services,  
Wicklow County Council,  
County Buildings,  
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Phone: 0404 20159  
Fax: 0404 20112  
e-mail: [recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie)

# Wicklow Changemakers shine light on their experiences of living with rare disease

A new rare disease awareness campaign 'I Am Number 17' was launched last week in Dublin by Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly. The campaign was initiated and funded by Takeda, a global leader in pharmaceutical research and development, in partnership with Rare Diseases Ireland (RDI) and Rare Ireland.

It features 17 'Changemakers' - individuals from all over Ireland living with a rare disease - who are sharing their stories to promote better understanding and awareness of rare diseases in Ireland. One of the Changemakers are the Martin family from County Wicklow who live with a Rare Disease called Metachromatic Leukodystrophy (MLD).

"I am delighted to launch the 'I Am Number 17' campaign," said Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly. "This campaign is an important step in raising awareness of rare diseases and recognition that while individually rare, collectively these conditions have significant impact in Irish society. I would like to commend the 17 Changemakers here today who are wonderfully captured in the photo exhibition.

"Their individual experiences are so important in fostering a better understanding of these conditions which are far more common than many may think."

The campaign title, 'I Am Number 17', reflects the fact that 1 in 17 people in Ireland will be affected by a rare disease at some point in their lives. The campaign will spotlight and share the lived experiences of these individuals, putting recognisable and relatable faces to the statistics. The Changemakers have been photographed for a very special exhibition by award winning photographer Julien Behal which will be on public display from the 8th of February at The chq Building in Dublin. This exhibition is designed to celebrate the Changemakers at the heart of this campaign.

One of those featured is activist and sports journalist Joanne O'Riordan who said, "I am happy to lend my voice to the 'I am Number 17' campaign to raise awareness and increase understanding of rare diseases. As someone living with a rare disease, my journey in the world of sports has taught me the power of visibility and representation. We are not defined by our conditions, but they do shape our experiences. It's time that the rare disease community sees themselves reflected on and off the field. I



the Martin family from County Wicklow who live with a Rare Disease called Metachromatic Leukodystrophy (MLD).

hope by sharing our stories, those living or caring for someone with a rare disease feel seen, heard, and supported."

Speaking at the launch Shane Ryan, General Manager at Takeda Ireland said, "At Takeda, we are committed to improving the lives of patients with rare diseases. The 'I Am Number 17' campaign is an important step in raising awareness of rare diseases and we were proud to partner with RDI and Rare Ireland on this initiative."

According to the National Rare Diseases Office (NRDO), rare diseases affect around 6% of the population in the Republic of Ireland, accounting for at least 300,000 individuals[1].

"Rare diseases can be devastating for patients and their families," said Laura Egan, Rare Ireland. "The 'I Am Number 17' campaign is an opportunity to give a voice to those living with rare diseases and to raise awareness of the need for more research and support."

"Rare diseases are a significant public health issue in Ireland," said Vicky McGrath CEO of Rare Diseases Ireland. "The 'I Am Number 17' campaign shines a light on the lived experiences of those living with rare diseases. It provides not just insight into the experiences of the 17 Changemakers, but also

tells us about their hope, dreams and aspirations. There is much we can learn from them."

At the launch, the results of a survey to assess knowledge and awareness about rare diseases among the Irish public were made public. The results[2] reveal a striking disparity between

awareness and understanding of rare diseases in Ireland. While 84% of respondents claimed to have some awareness of the term 'rare disease,' only 13% of those who indicated awareness of the term could correctly identify a condition classified as a rare disease.

Despite these mis-

understandings, the survey uncovered an encouraging trend: a clear call for increased attention to rare diseases, with 82% of all respondents agreeing that these conditions need to be taken more seriously. Additionally, 69% expressed an interest in learning more about rare diseases.



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.

• SENIOR EXECUTIVE TECHNICIAN

Salary: €51,251.00 – €61,728.00 (includes 2nd LSI)  
gross per annum

REF: 12/2024

• EXECUTIVE ARCHITECT

Salary: €55,519.00 – €77,176.00 (includes 2nd LSI)  
gross per annum

REF: 13/2024

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED  
APPLICATION FORMS IS THURSDAY 7TH MARCH 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](mailto:recruitment@wicklowcoco.ie) and on the Wicklow County Council website [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie)

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

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# Tourism networking and workshop event held at Beyond the Trees Avondale

**CLASSIFIEDS**

## 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. S.M.

Wicklow County Council in partnership with Wicklow Tourism Alliance organised a networking and workshop event on Thursday, 8th February at Beyond the Trees, Avondale. The event was attended by more than 100 participants including local tourism businesses and organisations representing various sectors of the tourism trade in Wicklow.

The event included updates from Lorraine Gallagher, Director of Services at Wicklow County Council; Fred Verdier, Tourism Officer, Wicklow County Council; Sarah Fitzpatrick, Fáilte Ireland; Vibeke Delahunt, Wicklow Local Enterprise Office and Alison Keogh from County Wicklow Partnership.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, who gave the opening address, said: "This event was a fantastic opportunity for the tourism trade in Wicklow to meet with one another, share ideas and experiences and plan for the 2024 season. It was also a great way for the trade to get updates of tourism projects in Wicklow and the East Coast, promotional activities, training, and funding opportunities.

"Wicklow County Council is delighted to have organised this event," said Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, who added: "Tourism is one of Wicklow's main economic drivers and the Council is dedicated to maximising the tourism potential for the county. The workshop delivered valuable feedback and ideas that will help the tourism team at Wicklow County Council plan for future activities."

After the workshop, a complimentary visit to the Treetop Walk and the newly opened Avondale House was enjoyed by attendees. In just a couple of years, Avondale has become one of Ireland's top attractions which many local businesses benefiting from the increased visitor numbers to County Wicklow.



(Back row); Brian Gleeson, Sarah Fitzpatrick, Vibeke Delahunt, Tina O'Dwyer, Lorraine Gallagher, Fred Verdier, and (front row); Sue Nichols, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, and Alison Keogh.

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## Support meeting for bereaved parents

Along with their monthly meetings across the country, Anam Cara hold bereavement information evenings, both in person and online, Remembrance Events, provide information packs, along with many other resources. All of their support services are available free of charge.

On Monday 19th February, Anam Cara will hold their monthly Wicklow meeting in The Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy @ 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 Wicklow and the surrounds to attend. Anam Cara can be contacted on 085 2888888 or by email [info@anamcara.ie](mailto:info@anamcara.ie).

For many, the new year can bring mixed emotions, especially for those bereaved. To date in 2024, Anam Cara, the organisation supporting bereaved parents nationwide, has noted an increase to those attending their monthly meetings. Whilst it brings much heartbreak that their services even have to exist, these monthly meetings are crucial to give bereaved parents a space to talk, listen and engage with their peers.

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