

Tuesday 20th February 2024 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

Fears about water supply contamination have been raised regarding the prospecting for lithium in West Wicklow, and Wicklow County Council remains uninformed about the exact nature of the plans.

As part of its Avalonia in this area, and explo- the presence of freshwater

Project, Lithium Limited (BLL), a subsidiary of Chinese different companies over Lithium Corporation, holds eleven contiguous prospecting licenses covering a total area of almost 300km in southeast Carlow and Southwest Wicklow, for the purpose of lithium exploration. The licenses stretch from Tinahely in West Wicklow to Boris Hill in Southwest Wicklow Ballymurphy in and Carlow. A geological survey in the 1970s revealed lithium bearing pegmatites took place and discovered

Blackstairs ration work has been carried out by a number of industrial giant Ganfeng the years until the licenses carry out a round of were acquired for the Avalonia Project in 2009. Since then, BLL have been surveying the land, examining rocks and collecting soil and sediment samples. Three previous drilling programmes have been carried out on Moylisha in 2013, 2018 and 2021.

pearl mussels in the surrounding waterways

This year BLL plan to exploration drilling on Moylisha Hill to extract core samples of rock. The drilling programme is expected to last up to five months and will consist of two diamond drill rigs operating for 12 hours per day, six days per week.

Speaking at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, Indep-Last year an environmental screening of Moylisha Hill endent councillor Mary Kavanagh said "the poten-



HIUM POISUN

Alex and Liliana Marini at the Smiley Pancake Fun Day in the De la Salle Pastoral Centre in Wicklow Town. Pic: Michael Kelly

tial problem is the effect on the water supply, which has been notified to myself, and I'm sure all the other councillors as well. An exploratory drilling will affect the purity of the water supply, not just on Moylisha Hill, but across the southeast region. This pristine supply is vital for domestic use, agricultural use, industrial use, local recreational use, and for tourism use. Protecting this water is in keeping with Coillte's aim of serving climate, nature, wood and people. Further drilling will also compromise the biodiversity and rich archaeological heritage in this area of high amenity along the Wicklow Way." According to Director of Services at Wicklow County Council, Breege Kilkenny, the Council is struggling to obtain more information about the mat-"Wicklow County ter: Council, like every other person in the country, all we get is a notification published in the newspaper to say that a prospecting

and they list all the townlands associated with it." she said. "I made two attempts to call [the relevant Government] department to find out a little bit more about what all this was about, and I am getting nowhere. We need to know, as a council, what is the whole detail attached with these? What does it mean when somebody goes out for a prospecting licence? I presume if somebody makes a request they would have to come up with specific reasons why they couldn't do an exploration drilling. But I still think we need to know why, and what is the national plan for the extraction of our natural minerals from the ground? All I can say is I will keep persevering on that."

Cllr Vincent Blake said "We have been attending meetings in Donegal for the last number of years regards that particular issue. We have been liaising with the company and with the local people there as well. It is an emotive licence is being granted, issue in the area, no doubt

about it. We are continuously talking to them. I have, over the years talked to the Planning Department here and the Department

well, and each time I am being referred on to the Department of Natural Resources.'

manufacture of rechargeable batteries for phones, laptops and other electronic devices, and the non-Lithium is a soft and sil- recharbale batteries in pacemakers and clocks





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Wicklow Rotary present a cheque for €7,000 to Wicklow Cancer Support with proceeds of the Rotary Christmas Tree. Pictured are Trevor Wood Rotary, Mary Heaslip and Siobhan Condon from Wicklow Cancer Support, with Barry O'Reilly of sponsor Wicklow Hire.

Non-violent resistance programme for parents and carers

Bray Area Partnership is offering a free six-week Non-violent Resistance (NVR) programme for parents and carers who are strug gling to cope with their child's aggressive behaviour.

Over the six weeks, participants will learn in a supportive environment how to identify what the problem is, create a calmer home environment and de-escalate conflict between them and their child.

The programme will run for six weeks in the SPECS Family Centre in Bray, on Tuesday mornings from 10am-12pm, starting on 5th March. You have to live in the Bray and north Wicklow area to attend and certain other qualifying criteria apply ñ see www.brayareapartnership.ie to find out more about this

The training is provided under the partnershipís Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which is cofunded by the Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) Programme 2021-2027.

To find out more and book your place call Jennifer Jones on 083 393 6923 or Sarah-Louise Cole on 086-0297445.

Laragh Glendalough **Active Retirement**

The group are back after their Christmas break and meet every Tuesday (10.45am-12pm) at the Brockagh Centre. So if you



fancy a chat, a cuppa, some light exercise, dancing and music come along on a Tuesday morn-ing. "We'd like to encourage anyone who loves arts & crafts or any other hobby, maybe youíve learned new skills and would like the space to practice and share your skills with other members, come along and join us. We always welcome new members to join our group.

The committee will be busy organising the weekly schedule, trips and workshops for over the coming months. If anyone would like to join, offer their services or share their skills with the group please contact the centre. For more information call Denise on 0404 45600, contact any committee member, email brockaghoffice @gmail.com laraghglendaloughara@gmail.com or drop in to the centre.

Soup & Sandwiches

The next Holy Rosary Soup 7 Sandwiches lunch is on Wednesday, 28th February in Kilian House Family Centre, Greystones, from 12.15 to 2pm. Everyone is welcome to come along to enjoy good home-made food and a friendly chat. Suggested donation €7. All proceeds are given to local charities

Children's art competition

Wicklow teachers in primary and second level schools, whose pupils take part in the annual Texaco Children's Art Competition, are reminded that the closing date for receipt of entries this year is Wednesday, 28th February next. Now in its 70th year, the Texaco Children's Art Competition is widely acknowledged as the longest running arts sponsorship in Ireland. Details are available at www.texacochildrensart.com

Community Orchard Planting Day in Newtown

Newtownmountkennedy Tidy Towns invites local residents to join them at 10am on Saturday 24th February, starting at the Newtown GAA pitch and continuing to green spaces in estates all across the town.

"We are planting a 'Dispersed Community Orchard' and its inspired by similar ones in Navan and Monaghan Town. The idea is to plant small pockets of fruit trees dispersed across all the estates and green areas in the town. "These trees will produce flowers and fruit

that will benefit pollinators and birds, but can also be collected and eaten by everyone in the community. Its a fun way to teach everyone about the benefits for nature and your own health from growing your own food, especially children.

"Thanks to a tree grant from Wicklow County Council and sponsorship from local business Wicklow Wolf Brewing Company, we've raised enough to get 90 heritage fruit trees for this first year

'We ran out of buckets to catch the rain!

One of Co Wicklow's best loved churches, St Joseph's in a lot of water damage. In order to Templerainey in the parish of Avoca, has been rescued by parishioners after the roof sprang a series of leaks.

rains over the past couple of years at Mass are no longer obligatory. started to come into the church. building and threatening the famous stained glass windows. Fr Murphy took immediate

action by investing in dozens of replastered." buckets to catch the rain but the continuous onslaught meant "we ran out of buckets to catch it!"

Parish priest, Fr Michael good news is that Phase 1 has Murphy, described how the heavy now been completed so umbrellas

"We have secured the roof so causing serious damage to the we no longer have to avoid the areas with the holes and the big stone wall at the gable end has been stripped back, treated and

Parishioners got together to including the floor to ceiling pan-

do this, many famous names from the world of music will come ogether on Friday 23rd February for An Evening of Spring Song.

They include Avril O'Toole Barbara Duffy, Donal Duffy and Pat Brennan, Dynamix, Gospel Choir, Johnny Stafford and Dinny Nolan, Michael Flood, St Joseph's Church choir, Stephen Walker and the Walker Sisters

The next phase will be to Tickets at €20 each are avail-secure the stained glass panels for able from local businesses as well which the church is famous, as the parish office, tel 0402-including the floor to ceiling pan- 31943. And best of all - concertfundraise for the work and the els in the altar area which suffered goers are promised a dry night.

A night of community building for South Greystones residents

Communities in South Greystones (Archers Wood, Hawkins, Glenheron, Aldborough, Seabourne, Charlesland), are thrilled to announce the upcoming second community gettogether. Residents from all areas are invited to join the event, a night of camaraderie, tea, and community building set to take place at the Charlesland Community Centre on Friday, February 23rd.

This residential community's tea party goes beyond the usual social gathering. It's a unique opportunity to reinforce the bonds within the neighbourhood, share innovative ideas, and pave the way for the creation of exciting new clubs and activities. Cllr Mark Barry

expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming event, stating, "I am delighted to be working with a great group of people organizing this evening to provide an opportunity for new and old residents of Greystones to meet and explore potential needs and set up clubs of mutual interest. This is particularly important as our community continues to grow, and was established to allow people to come together, get to know one another, and share ideas and thoughts on how to build an even stronger local

Community" Cllr Barry further commended the efforts of volunteers, particularly highlighting Arpara and Sukant Pandey, who also organized the Hawkins Wood Street Fest last summer. He emphasized their dedication to creating a more vibrant community.

• WICKLOW

is published by Wicklow Times,

Event Highlights: Neighbours: Strengthen the sense of community by engaging with your South Greystones neighbours. • Share Your Thoughts and Ideas: Contribute to the growth and improvement of our neighbourhood by sharing your valuable ideas.

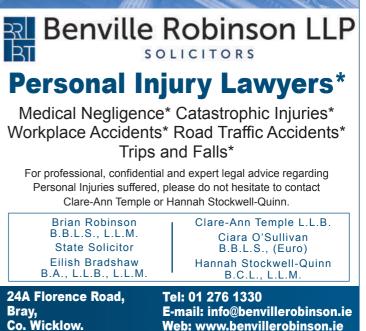
• Create Clubs: Explore make our Community · Connect with Fellow the possibility of forming even better! This is an clubs based on common interests, such as games, books, or films.

• Fun for Both Kids and Adults: A family-friendly event with activities designed for all age group CIIr Barry concluded,

"Let's come together and

opportunity for us to build a stronger, more connected South Greystones. See you there!"

Further updates are on Sount Greystones Communities Facebook Page Or you can contact Mark Barry at mark.barry @socialdemocrates.ie



Web: www.benvillerobinson.ie

In contentious business, a solicitor may not calculate fees or other charges as a percentage or proportion of any award or settlement

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NEWS 3

'Report will reveal the community's opposition'

Sinn Fein TD John Brady has urged Wicklow Council to proceed without delay with the preparation and publication of the Post Publication Consultation Report for the N11/M11 **Bus Priority Interim Scheme.**

Between November last year, the Council carried out a public consultation to determine public attitudes to the proposed Scheme, the results of which Deputy Brady argues would reveal the strength of feeling and opposition in the community in Bray towards the proposal in its current form.

Since the closure of the public consultation period last November, Wicklow County Council received over one thousand submissions regarding the scheme's proposals.

Deputy Brady said "I welcome the fact that Wicklow County Council in place of the existing roundabout. has completed the public consultation process on the N11/M11 Bus Priority Interim Scheme and is currently preparing a post publication consultation report. In November I submitted a Sinn Fein petition opposing the Junction, and the Hills roundabout. plans as they had been presented to

September and the public. The strength of public Bray. I do not believe that the traffic opinion on the issue can be seen from the 1,853 signatories to the petition.

"In addition, there were a further 1,152 submissions, including one which I submitted in my own name, in which I outlined the reasons for my strong opposition to the existing plans. It is absolutely clear that the primary issue of concern for members of the public which was evident across the submissions to the Council concerned the closure of the Herbert Road Junction, and the installation of a traffic lights system at Hill Garage

"The reality is that the traffic plans as they were presented are not just unworkable, they would result in a disaster for motorists and residents who currently use the Herbert Road

prevented from using the Herbert Road would travel to the Bray North Junction. Nor would they use the Old Fassaroe Junction, which would take them onto the Main Street, which is itself overwhelmed with traffic

"This would result in traffic being forced to use the new junction at the former Hills Roundabout. Planners have already conceded that the new junction will privilege traffic exiting the N11. The anticipated influx of additional traffic would be significantly more than this junction could cope with. Particularly when we consider that vehicles are forced to que out onto the N11 as they await access to the junction.

Through my ongoing interaction with local people and motorists on this issue, and the response in terms "There are three other junctions in of support for the petition and the



Conor O'Toole, with Nicky, Mary and Anne Redmond and pet Izzy at the Valentine's Day Bruce Springsteen tribute concert at Asgard Nursing Home in Arklow.

number of submissions tabled the strength of opposition is abundantly clear

"Once again, I am calling on the Green Party Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan to abandon his ideological approach to our transport infrastructure, and to respect the fact that there is massive local opposition to the current proposals. The voice and reason of local people must be listened to?

Scheme is very important to our towns and villages in North Wicklow, and is an issue I have been working very closely on with both Wicklow County Council and Transport

Infrastructure Ireland. "During the public consultation period, I met and spoke with a large number of Brav and Enniskerry's residents to discuss their concerns such as the proposed closure of the need.

Minister Simon Harris said "This Herbert Road junction, the effects the scheme will have on traffic throughout the town and the proposed closure of Enniskerry's junction.

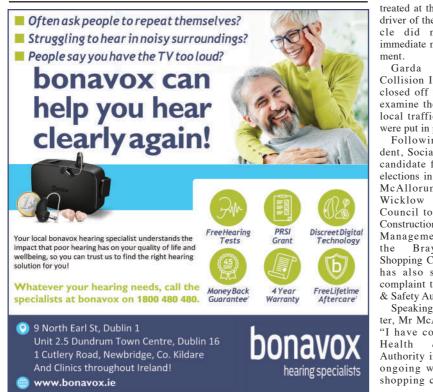
"After encouraging local residents to voice their concerns, I am delighted to see that over 1,000 people sent in submissions to have their say over how their own communities will develop. North Wicklow's residents know best what their communities

Health & Safety Authority contacted following Bray accident

An accident on Bray Main Street last Thursday caused major disruptions as a section of the street was closed off for several hours.



Emergency services attend the scene in Bray last Thursday



Gardaí and emergency services were alerted to the scene shortly before 2:00pm following a col-lision involving a works vehicle and a car.

The impact caused the car to mount the footpath, striking three female pedestrians.

Two of the pedestrians, both females aged in their 60s, and the driver of the car, a woman in her 80s, were transported by ambulance to St Vincent's Hospital, Gardai said their injuries are not believed to be lifethreatening. The third pedestrian, a

woman in her 50s, was treated at the scene. The driver of the works vehicle did not require immediate medical treat-

Forensic Collision Investigators closed off the street to examine the scene, and local traffic diversions were put in place

Following the inci-dent, Social Democrats candidate for the local elections in Bray, Aaron McAllorum, asked Wicklow County Council to release the Construction Site Traffic Management Plan for the Bray Central Shopping Centre and he has also submitted a complaint to the Health & Safety Authority.

Speaking on the mat-ter, Mr McAllorum said "I have contacted the Health & Safety Authority in relation to ongoing works in the shopping centre. Bray

Central is still an active this is something I have users with camera footage site in terms of construction and fit-out with construction traffic mixing with pedestrians in the

the HSA." Gardaí are appealing for witnesses to come forcentral plaza area and ward.

Additionally, road Gardaí. Anyone with Garda Station. connecting footpaths -

drawn to the attention of (including dash-cam) from the vicinity of Main Street, Bray, at the time of the incident are urged to provide this footage to

information regarding this incident is asked to contact Bray Garda Station at 01 6665300, the Garda Confidential Line at 1800 666 111, or any

Citizens Information C: **Information Officer**

Part Time, 17.5 Hours per week, South Leinster CIS/Co.Wicklow

South Leinster Citizens Information Service (CIS) is currently seeking to recruit a permanent Part Time Information Officer for its Co Wicklow service. This position will be mainly based in Arklow.

Key tasks for the post include the direct delivery of information, advice, advocacy and referral services, and liaison with other service providers, both statutory and voluntary.

Excellent communication skills, a good level of research and IT skills, and a Leaving Certificate and/or equivalent of education are required. Ideally, applicants will also hold a higher-level qualification in relevant field of study, (e.g. social policy, human rights, social work/social care practice, legal qualification etc.), and / or substantial previous work experience in a busy information/advice/advocacy environment.

- Permanent: This is a permanent position, subject to completion of a 6 month probationary period.
- Full Time Salary Scale: €29,821 €45,498 including 2 x LSIs, long serving increments (pro rata for part-time staff).
- . Incremental Credit: It is expected, that all new entrants to South Leinster CIS will be appointed at point one of the salary scale. However South Leinster CIS operates an incremental credit process for appointments higher than point one. This process is applicable to new entrants into South Leinster CIS. Incremental credit criteria, based on the competencies for the role, are assessed against employment history as laid out in the application form only. A request for incremental credit from a successful candidate must be made within the first 3 months of employment. The decision on whether or not to award an incremental credit is a decision made by the Board and is subject to the availability of funding.

Applications must be made on the relevant application form and emailed to: martina.cronin@citinfo.ie

Closing date: 5.00pm on Wednesday, 13th March, 2024 (late applications will not be accepted).

A detailed job description and application form together with further information on CIS can be accessed at https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/en/news/vacancies/io20240213.htm

For details on how your personal data will be used as part of this process our Data Protection Notice for Job Applicants is available at: http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/en/data_protection/cib.html South Leinster Citizens Information Service is an equal opportunities employer



Bray will see the construction of its first ever skateboard park after the of it's size. It's certainly needed. I would like majority of councillors voted to support it at a meeting of Bray Municipal to pay tribute to the Bray skateboarding asso-District last night.

support the park including Cllrs Erika Doyle, Aoife Flynn Kennedy and Rory O'Connor, three councillors who formed part of the skate park sub-committee and worked to develop the proposal. The skatepark will mean that Bray 's skateboarders will no longer have to travel to Greystones or Monkstown.

The skate park was designed in conjunction with Bray Skateboarding Association who campaigned and lobbied for a park for over a decade. The park will be located close to Shoreline Leisure in the Ballywaltrim area off the Southern Cross Road. During the meeting the councillors paid tribute to the skateboarders and also thanked local residents for their robust contribution to the public consultation process

Cllr Erika Doyle said, "We are delighted to be able to deliver this much wanted amenity for young people in Bray, and some not so

Five of the eight Bray councillors voted to young! Some of the skaters who began the campaign many years ago are now parents of young skaters themselves. The part 8 process allowed us to hear the views and deal with concerns of a wide range of people. I am confident that the community will work together to make the very most of this new facility."

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy said, "The call for a skatepark in Bray has been made for years, however calls for something do not work, it takes real action. I commend the Bray Skateboard Association, the officials and my fellow Councillors who took the necessary action to finally bring this amenity to Bray. My thanks to the local community for and against who participated in the process. This is a significant milestone and a result of Councilors working together for the good of

ciation. Who have been constantly pushing for the need of this amenity. They are a credit to the area. I believe this to be just the start for new amenities for the southern cross and I'm looking forward to pushing for more.

Councillors Melanie Corrigan and Anne Ferris also voted in favour of the skatepark while councillors Joe Behan, Dermot 'Daisy O'Brien and Mick Ryan voted against it.

Concerns had been expressed by some local residents from Giltspur and Deepdales about the suitability of the location. There was also a feeling among some local residents that there had not been enough consultation with them

The Bray Skateboarding Association stated: "We'd like to take a moment to acknowledge those who supported the proposal [...] We'll do our part to make this park a success-ful addition to the community and we hope that over time we can convince un-Cllr Rory O'Connor said, "This skateboard opposed or who voted against it, of the park's pork is well overdue for Bray and for a town merits."



Tuesday 20th February 2024



Councillors Erika Doyle, Aoife Flynn-Kennedy and Rory O'Connor

'Greystones Development Plan must provide more schools and facilities'

Cllr Derek Mitchell has made a submission to the pre-Draft Greystones Development Plan showing that the population at Census time two years ago, was already over the target population for 2028

"Since then many houses have been occupied and more granted permission and I expect that the popu-lation will be 26,000, which is 20% greater than Target, in 2028," said Cllr Mitchell. "I want to see the town facilities planned for the higher number not the Target including: Another Primary and Secondary School should be zoned over and above Greystones Community College which has yet to be built 15 years after zoning by the Council; Also more land is needed for commercial use. Greystones has the greatest number of Commuters of the any of the larger settlements, more local jobs are needed to reduce commuting; A better DART and bus service; Other facilities needed in the large town include, Public Parks, playing pitches, an Hotel and an Arts Centre.



North Beach works planned in Greystones

and ARUP to discuss the North Beach in Grevstones on Friday, February 9th, 2024. The key items discussed were the ongoing erosion of the North Beach and the access ramp, which has come under pressure following recent storms.

Cllr Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District commented that it was an informative meeting Cllr Stokes stated: "Erosion

along the North Beach is now accelerating faster than the expected 0.5 metres per year. It is now closer to 1-2 metres per year. One of the key ways to stymy beach erosion is with beach nourishment. This has not been done for 6-7 years, and so it is not surprising that the erosion has accelerated. I welcome a commitment to do another batch of beach nourishment in 2024.

The meeting heard that if rock armour or an equivalent measure was taken it would put Greystones

Stephen Stokes, enormous pressure at the endpoint of the rock armour. In addition it is likely to remove any sand in front of rock armour. The North Beach access ramp was also discussed in length. Cllr Stephen Stokes added: "The ramp will require a detailed plan of action. All going to plan, it is hoped that work will commence in the late Summer 2024. I asked if interim work could be carried out to sta-bilise the path. We were advised that this will be done. But of course this is not a complete fix. Until we have a long term solution, it is still vulnerable to extreme weather events. I will continue to press for improvements along the North Beach in



Cllr Stephen Stokes

Safety speed signs installed in Roundwood

Green TD Steven Matthews reports that new 30kph solar powered flashing signs have been installed at St Laurence O'Toole's National School in Roundwood.

Deputy Matthews said, "Due to reports of road safety issues to me, I met last year with the school principal, parents and local residents to see how we could make it safer for children and parents to get to school. I was very concerned at the dangerous speeds of vehicles and the very narrow footpaths for everyone walking to school and committed to prioritising the new signage and 30kph zone for Roundwood.

unprecedented funding The signs are solar for pedestrian safety and powered and provide a cycling improvements large flashing warning to and we are seeing it drivers to slow down to across the county. Every 30kph. These will be new or improved footpath, pedestrian crossing rolled out to other school areas across the county. or cycle way is being There is much more work funded by that Green Party commitment. "I am working with to be done to address traffic speeds and pedestrian and school children local residents, Wicklow safety in Roundwood but County Council and local this is a good start. election candidate Mia

Fahey McCarthy to deliv-"When I ran for elecer further safety measures in the Wicklow district. tion I committed to residents in this area that I would work to improve One of our transport priroad safety and to make it orities is funding a new cluded Deputy Matthews

easier for everyone to Local Link bus service walk or cycle through from Laragh to Bray their towns. In Govtown centre and railway ernment we secured station and lim hopeful of delivering that service later this year. Just this week Wicklow County Council received another 8 million euro for cycling and walking projects for towns and villages across Wicklow and we will be working to see that Roundwood gets its fare share from that fund.

"If you are aware of a road safety issue or have ideas on how we can make our roads safer for all users, young or older, urban or rural, please get in touch with me," con



Steven Matthews TD in Roundwood

A meeting was held between Councillors, Council Officials

Times **Government failures** 'fuelling anger and fear' in local communities

Independent councillor Joe Behan has suggested that Wicklow County Council should consider going the way of Mayo County Council in voting to cease coorporation with the Department of Integration until proper services are put in place to accommodate refugeees and asylum seekers.



Cllr Ioe Behan

Cllr Behan made his com ments at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council as councillors discussed the 'Arklow Says No' rally which took place on Saturday 10th February. Approximately 600 people gathered in Arklow to protest against the former Eir building at the Croghan Industrial Estate being used as an Protection International Accomodation Services (IPAS) centre

"We are not being treated properly by that particular Department, and it is causing huge anxiety, stress, worry and upset right across this county, and right across the country. And it is not good enough for a Department of Integration and a Junior Minister to basically be calling the shots on this issue," said Cllr Behan.

Arklow Independent councillor Peir Leonard complained there had been a "huge lack of communication and transparency" that's been fuelling anger and fear in the local community.

"People are so frightened they're camping out in front of [the Eir] buillding, including older people in their 80s, and this is totally unacceptable. It's in large part due to the lack of communication," said Cllr Leonard. "We need people who are professionally educated to support us in our role in the local communities to be able to liaise with the local communities and to lead in



Cllr Peir Leonard

this and be able to open up a line communication.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Emer O'Gorman said that "misinformation is absolutely rife" in Arklow and around the country, and that "there is absolutely a vacuum in the information that is being provided" to the Council from the Department.

"We get provided information via a request from the Department of Children and they ask a very simple question," said the Chief Executive. "They put a property on Tracker (the database that they use) and they ask us have we any information about the building - positive or negative. They just tell us it's being considered for Ukrainian accommodation or for international protection, or they don't tell us at all. They just ask have we any information about the property. We supply whatever information that might be. So if we have a fire cert, we supply

that information. She went on to say: "I think the situation is so dire in the country at the moment, and accommodation is so scarce, that any offer of accommodation is being seriously considered by the Department, whether or not the person offering the accommodation has the right to do so.'

Speaking last week, Sinn Fein TD John Brady said "This Government failure is leading to deep-seated frustration amongst local communities. In Arklow over the weekend, we witnessed the physical manifestation of that fear and frustration, when hundreds of members of the local community, who are not racists, took to the streets to give expression to the resentment that exists on the ground at the failure of the government to put in place a fair, efficient, and enforced immigration system.

"I want to be clear; this state has both legal and moral obligations to provide to provide sanctuary for people fleeing war, fleeing murder, torture and rape, and grave repression. These obligations are laid out very clearly under international law. Yet, we have a Government who have approached the whole situation in an ad-hoc, willy-nilly fashion with the assumption that they foist their failures on local com-munities and that would be that.

"Last weekend, hundreds of people marched in Arklow to protest at this Government failure. The vast majority of these people are not racists. They are simply in a state of fear and frustration at what they see as their abandonment bv the Government. It is this lack of Government presence, this lack of a coherent plan, and an absolute failure to communicate which has created a vacuum on



Cheif Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman

which is being exploited by groups, whose sole intent is to create division and sow discord ties. in communities in order to reap a form of political dividend.

"I believe in our local communities. I believe that our people have proven their compassion and kind heartedness in the manner in which they have reached out and attempted to integrate refugees across Wicklow. We see in areas like Carnew, where there is a whole new community inte-



grated into the area by locals. But the government, having failed to conduct an audit of the needs of refugees or the local community, effectively abandoned both the community and the refugees, leaving a situation where an area that was reliant on a part-time GP service, now is dealing with an additional influx of people, with no additional services, leaving people in the community having to wait from two to three weeks for a GP appointment. This is being replicated across the state. Where there is no attempt by the government to address the shortcomings of services in local areas before placing more people into that community.

"In respect of the situation in Arklow, Minister Joe O'Brien has come back and said that responsibility in relation to the property in question in Arklow has been given to Minister Darragh O'Brien's Department of the ground across the state, Housing for determination as to touch," added Mr Leahy.

whether it would be suitable for accommodation for Ukrainians.

"There appears to be no workable plan in place, no consistent approach. Because of the failure of government there is a lot of genuine anxiety within local communities as to how these issues have been handled. The government must act immediately to address this crisis. A plan needs to be put in place which would see the creation of staterun accommodation centres, including e.g. using buildings like vacant office blocks, so that the basic needs of Ukrainians and asylum seekers for shelter and safety can be met. A plan which allows local hotels and other buildings to be returned to their original purposes to the greatest extent possible to restore local tourism-based economies and vital services for communi-

Protesters in Arklow made their way from the Croghan Industrial Estate to the bandstand, where they were addressed by Irish Freedom Party Chairman and candidate for Ireland South in the upcoming European Parliament elec-tions, Michael Leahy.

"It is clear to me that the Government has utterly lost con-trol of a problem that has now become the most pressing and urgent in the country, that of unvetted and unregulated mass migration into Ireland," he said.

Mr Leahy is an architect and planner by profession, a former president of Ennis Chamber of Commerce and a former Board member of an Bord Pleanala. It was his second visit to Co.Wicklow, having previously visited West Wicklow including Baltinglass some two weeks before. Mr Leahy said he believes Ireland should "opt out from the international protection regime which was included as

part of our negotiations to the Lisbon treaty. If elected to the European Parliament I will also demand an end to mass migration into the continent of Europe and push for a combined response to this urgent problem. It is time for Ireland to critically review its attachment to the UN asylum protocol which was last updated 1967 long before cheap airfares became possible. Such review does not mean turning our back on legitimate refugees. but it is clear that the present system is not working and is being 'gamed'."

It was revealed by the European Commission in late 2023 that the rate of Ukrainians arriving into Ireland had been 10 times the EU average over the previous 12 months.

"It is clear that the policies adopted by the Government have created a type of welfare tourism where Ireland is seen as a soft



Mary Wood and Kathleen McGovern at the St.Valentine's Day Bruce Springsteen tribute concert at Asgard Nursing Home, Arklow.



PREPARATION OF THE BLESSINGTON LOCAL **AREA PLAN**

Consultations under Section 20 of the Planning & **Development Act 2000**

(as amended)

Wicklow County Council intends to review the existing plan and prepare a new Local Area Plan for the settlement of 'Blessington'. An online consultation portal has been created, which details the significant planning topics that the Local Area Plan will address. The portal can be accessed through wicklow.ie and is accepting submissions from 21st February 2024 to 3rd April 2024.

The Blessington Local Area Plan 2013 is the current land use plan for the settlement and is available to view on Wicklow County Council's website at www.wicklow.ie

INFORMATION DAY

A drop-in public information day with the plan team will be held in The Coimín Centre, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow W91 F77F on Friday the 1st of March 2024, from 10.00-13.00 and from 16.00- 19.00.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions or observations regarding the review of the existing plan and the preparation of the new Local Area Plan are hereby invited from the public and interested bodies, between the period 21st February 2024 to 3rd April 2024. Children, or groups or associations representing the interests of children, are entitled to make submissions or observations.

Submissions may be made in either of the following ways:

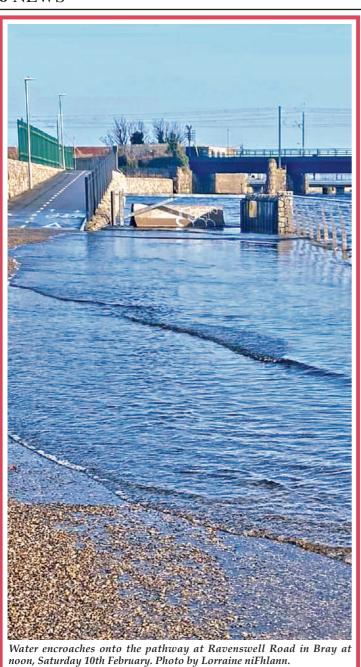
- Write to: 'Blessington LAP', Administrative Officer, Planning Department, Wicklow County Council, Station Road, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow A67 FW96
- Through the online consultation portal at www.wicklow.ie which can be accessed by scanning the below QR code.

NOTE

All submissions should include your name and an email address/ contact address and, where relevant, details of any organisation, community group or company etc., which you represent. Please make your submission by one medium only, i.e. hard copy or through the portal. The planning process is an open and public one. In that context, all submissions/ observations are a matter of public record, and may also be placed on the County Council's website.







Times Tuesday 20th February 2024 Local Authorities to use CCTV and drones to target illegal dumpers

Minister Ossian Smyth has signed regulations that will allow local authorities to use CCTV, drones and other technologies to tackle illegal dumping and flytipping.

The move comes in

response to the urgent need for more effective measures to combat the environmental blight of illegal dumping, an issue that costs Ireland up to Ä100m each year in clean-up efforts. The introduction of these technologies, as facilitated by the Circular Economy Act 2022, ensures that local authorities can now operate within data protection regulations to implement these crucial environmental protections

There has been a call for additional resources for local authorities to not only deploy this technology but also to provide necessary training for staff to maximise its effectiveness

Laurie Kearon, the Fine Gael local election candidate for South Arklow, said "It's essential that Wicklow County Council is equipped with the tools and knowledge to use covert CCTV and other technologies effectively. Such a campaign against environmental crimes is overdue. The harm caused by illegal dumping and fly tipping affects both urban and rural communities deeply and I am confident that this measure will



Illegal dumping in the Wicklow Uplands

receive strong support from tidy towns committees and local councillors across Co Wicklow.'

represents a critical development in Ireland's environmental policy, addressing long-standing challenges in waste management and environmental protection. "This is a pivotal

moment in our ongoing

concluded. "With the right tools and a united commufor the technology to be nity effort, we can tackle used in a way that comthe scourge of illegal plies with data protection This legislative step dumping and ensure a regulations but a delay by cleaner, greener future for the Local Government all.

Management Agency (LGMA) in developing Senator Malcolm Byrne pointed to a survey of local codes meant that it is local Councils he conductonly now that the meaed in 2021 that found that sures can be enforced. Ireland spends up to Senator Byrne has E100m each year dealing called for additional with illegal dumping and resourcing for local

upskill staff. Act 2022 made provision

He said: "Councils have to be able to use covert CCTV and other technology to catch environmental criminals. We need a concerted campaign on this issue. The damage caused by illegal dumping and flytipping, in urban and rural areas, is huge and I know that this measure will be welcomed by tidy towns groups as well as by authorities to deploy local Councillors across

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efforts to safeguard our littering. authorities to deproy local counter authorities author Brady calls for immediate publication of Government's Ash Dieback Strategy

Sinn Fein TD John Brady has called on Minister Hackett to publish the Government's Ash **Dieback Strategy immediately.**

The independent review on the Governmentís response to Ash Dieback was presented to the Minister in September. The review stressed the urgency of the situation and recommended action on the issue of Ash Dieback.

Minister Hackett had previously advised in December that the awaited strategy would be presented to Cabinet in the ëvery near futureí, but no further updates have been given since then.

Deputy Brady said: "I am calling on Minister Hackett to publish the Governmentís strategy on Ash Dieback without delay. The Minister has repeatedly provided assurances that a detailed Action Plan is being prepared to deal with the issue of Ash Dieback and that this would be

presented to Cabinet very soon.



John Brady TD

review of the Government's response to Ash Dieback back in September, which stressed how "She received the independent urgent this situation is and suggested Dieback immediately."

a range of actions to address the issue of Ash Dieback. Yet, the weeks and months continue to pass, the issue of Ash Dieback continues to worsen, and we still do not have sight of a strategy.

"Farmers, forestry landowners and representative organisations both here in Wicklow and across the state have continuously highlighted the really serious situation they are facing as a result of the issue of Ash Dieback being allowed to go on for so long. As I have said before, it is a health and safety risk and a cause of financial loss and frustration for affected farmers and forestry owners that is set to worsen if measures are not put in place immediately.

'There is no more time to lose, and the Minister must publish a strategy to address the issue of Ash

€14.5 million is being allocated towards improving and maintaining Wicklow roads in 2024. This is part of an investment package of €658m nationwide. The money will see 2,640km of regional and local roads be maintained to required standards, and a further 2,160km be strengthened to improve the overall quality of the road network.

road safety for pedestrians and cyclists under this scheme. Projects include climate change adaptation works in Ashford, Wicklow Gap and Calary, safety works in Delgany, Rathdrum and Kiltegan and the Blessington Inner Relief Road Project.

Speaking following the announce ment from the Department of Transport, Green Party TD Steven Matthews said: "This funding is crucial to improving road safety for Wicklow residents. All road users including motorists, cyclists and pedestrians will benefit from these repairs to local and regional roads. It is important that we continue to protect and renew our road network in Wicklow so that it doesnít fall into a state of disrepair or neglect. We can do this while maintaining our commitment to a 2:1 expenditure ratio between public transport infrastructure and active travel investment

compared to roads spending. "I am delighted that a number of climate adaptation works have been introduced for roads at risk of severe weather events. These works will help to protect our transport network from the effects of climate change. We have seen great progress already since this grant was introduced. Some of the projects this year include a flood relief scheme in Calary, an edge protection and drainage scheme along the Wicklow Gap and improvements

in Ashford town. "Road safety improvements will

There is a particular emphasis on be particularly important as we con- West Wicklow for a long number of tinue to expand rural bus routes. Significant funding will also be provided to install cycle signs and speed limit signage. The launch of this scheme follows the record funding for walking and cycling schemes in Wicklow announced last week. This investment is essential to improving our transport infrastructure in Wicklow," Deputy Matthews concluded.

Fianna Fail Senator Pat Casey said "This investment will allow us to repair, strengthen and maintain our roads across the region, ensuring they are fit for purpose. We are dedicating resources towards initiatives such as road repair, bridge rehabilitation, road safety measures, community engagement, drainage improvements, and climate change adaptation.

"Maintaining and improving our road network is crucial to sustaining and developing our local economies across rural Ireland. These roads are imperative for children getting to school and people getting to work safely.

Senator Casey emphasised the importance of this investment for rural regeneration and concluded by saying that a key priority for Fianna F-il in Government continues to be the protection and renewal of the existing regional and local road network

Cllr Edward Timmins Cathaoir leach of the Baltinglass Municipal District said "I have been advocating for increased funding for roads in

years so I welcome this allocation for regional and local roads particularly for the Blessington Bypass €500k, and Valleymount €250k and also the Bridge Works in Colbinstown, Ballyhubbock and Kilbride. Additionally, I would like to wel-come the funding for the safety improvement works in Kiltegan Village, the Carnew Road in Shillielagh and the N81 Tinode to Sraghmore. The N81 remains one of the most dangerous roads in our county (and country) so I hope further funding could be made available in this particular case.3

Cllr Stephen Stokes, Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District also welcomed the funding but called for further investment. In the Greystones District, planned projects include road safety works in Delgany Wood Road (€140,000).

"This is good news for Delgany. I have been campaigning for road and footpath improvements in this area. I am grateful to Wicklow County Council for recently fixing a damaged roundabout in Delgany Wood at my request.

"I would like to see decisive investment across the Greystones Municipal District. There is an urgent need to improve many more areas including Kilcoole Main Street, Delgany Village, Newcastle, Grattan Park, Church Lane & Church Road in Greystones to name but a few. I will continue to press for more resources to be spent



Fintan Clarke, David Drane and Aidan Walsh at the Wicklow County Council Tourism Netowrk & Workshop event at Beyond the Trees, Avondale.



phone: 01-4940200

Opening Times Mon - Sat (10.00am - 5.00pm) Sun & Bank Holidays - Closed Unit B7, South City Business Pk, Tallaght, D24



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



Times Tuesday 20th February 2024 Bray railway interchange works to beg



Steven Matthews TD at Bray Dart Station

The long-awaited refurbishment to the forecourt and station road area at Bray Railway Station is set to commence this week. Phase One construction works will involve the laying of the main stormwater drainage line for the project and will include works on Bray Promenade and Quinsborough Road.

Party TD Steven Matthews said: "It has taken much longer than I expected, but this upgrade is urgently needed and will make a huge difference to pedestrian, cyclists and commuters' safety when using the bus or train station. Currently it is one of the most hostile road layouts in the town for any users including drivers. There is no clear indication for anyone exiting the station on where you should walk or cycle while buses, cars and taxis compete for limited space.

"I have been assured that residents and businesses will be contacted in advance to advise them of how the project will proceed including how traffic and pedestrian diversions will operate.

"The new design and planning permission was agreed in 2018 when I was a Bray councillor and I participated closely in design and safety improvements in this fully NTA funded scheme. The entire road frontage at the station will be reconfigured for pedestrian safety, with better bus parking and taxi spaces and provide a much more and taxi stands to be agreed and

Welcoming the progress, Green attractive introduction to our town now that is all completed. for anyone arriving by bus or train. There will be wider footpaths, safe crossing points and clear cycling routes to the station and lots of bike parking. The design and layout of the paths and roadways will create an urban plaza type area with tree planting and seating.

"The work will also include the construction of 2 speed tables and pedestrian crossings at the junction of Station and Adelaide Road and at the junction of Adelaide Road and Quinsborrough Road. This will greatly improve pedestrian safety and accessibility at these busy crossing points where most commuters cross when going to the station area.

"I have worked consistently with the Roads section in Wicklow County Council and with Irish Rail to ensure advance works, co-operation and agreements were in place between both organisations before the main work starts. There was lots of planning of temporary access routes, rerouting of drainage and services, and alternative bus stops

"I look forward to these works progressing and ultimately, visitors to Bray will be greeted by a far more attractive gateway to our town and local commuters, cyclists and residents will have far safer access to public transport," concluded Deputy Matthews.

Also welcoming the progress, Minister Simon Harris said delighted to see these works finally going ahead. The DART is an incredibly important public transport link for the people of Wicklow to travel in and out of Dublin, and it is so important that we continue to see investment and work put into this to make sure it is able to meet, and exceed, the needs of our com munity.

"These works will kick off this Government project to provide a high quality interchange between the key modes of transport at Bray's Train Station. I look forward to continuing to work with Wicklow County Council as this project pro gresses and seeing the benefits this will bring Bray upon its completion," Minister Harris concluded.

'School transport system is not serving Wicklow communities'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has called on the Minister for Education to outline plans to reform the school bus scheme. School buses in Wicklow and around the country are an annual cause of consternation for families who apply and secure tickets, pay for them, and then find months into the school year that their childís school bus is still not running.

issue to the Minister's attention again at the earliest opportunity. We need a meaningful update on this matter from the Minister with

Wicklow communities that need it. There are over 50 students in Wicklow who successfully applied to the scheme and parents who have

Deputy Whitmore said: "I will bring this for the current term and are still waiting for services ñ six months after they were supposed to commence. Bus ... ireann, which runs the School Transport Scheme on behalf of the responsibility in the Department of Education. Department of Education, recently confirmed 'The school transport system is not serving that three services in the county are yet to become operational.

"The B9212 was supposed to cater for Wicklow post-primary schools and carry up to paid for a place on a school bus for their child 53 students but it has yet to enter service. Five

to get them to school have also not been facilitated under the scheme. This is not acceptable and not sustainable going into the future. In the coming weeks, the 2024/2025 school year applications will begin while issues remain unresolved with this year's buses.

Deputy Whitmore continued: "The Minister for Education has adopted a handsoff approach to the operation of the School Transport Scheme and is letting Bus Eireann take the lion's share of the blame for its failings. It is clear that we need to see the establishment of a new national school bus service that is removed from the control of the Department of Education and placed under

students with additional needs requiring taxis the remit of the Department of Transport There should also be a major recruitment drive to attract part-time drivers in rural areas perhaps even farmers looking for additional income sources. I have been contacted by people interested in becoming drivers for school buses in Wicklow over the last year who have not been able to join the scheme. It is such a shame when there is clearly a need for more drivers.

> "Time is running out. Between now and September, the Department of Education has to get its act together. Parents and children must not be abandoned again, and I will continue to work on this issue for the families still waiting in Wicklow for this year.



Greystones DART needs an upgrade'

Greystones DART passengers currently have three different rail timetables available to them: The Journey Planner which is now correct, an older one on the internet and a different older one in front of the station.

ago I told Irish Rail that ones available and one tated. has since been removed. Showing passengers a single correct timetable is term plan needs to be a basic part of rail operations especially where the station is unmanned most of the time. I have also had complaints about unreliability. This is bad

management. "There have been many works cancellations at the weekend. DART is an essential urban transport system. Alternatives such as hourly 84x and extra buses to Dublin, pened."

Speaking about the Blackrock or Bray should matter, Cllr Derek be put on if repairs are Mitchell said "five weeks needed. People still have to get to work, study and there were four different the many tourists facili-

> "The Bray/Greystones DART+ South longer advanced before the more contentious level crossing closures in Sandymount and Bray. Traffic on the N11 is getting much worse and as the only single line track in the Metropolitan Area an upgrade is needed. It is now six years since I produced a plan for this and Arup's reviewed it, yet nothing has hap



At the Wicklow County Council Tourism Netowrk & Workshop event at Beyond the Trees, Avondale, were Brian Gleeson, Sarah Fitzpatrick, Lorraine Gallagher, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy (Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council), Sue Nichols, Pat O'Suilleabhain and Fred Verdier.

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Thanks for Supporting Irish Business, Irish Manufacturers and for Shopping Local Housing Association for Integrated Living (HAIL), is seeking partnership opportunities with local property developers, estate agents and private sellers, to support them provide more homes in Wicklow.

Founded in 1985, HAIL provides social housing and professional tenancy support services, primarily to people living with mental health difficulties. The housing association recently launched its new strategic plan, where it announced plans to provide 300 new homes over the next five years.

To support their growth plans, HAIL is now seeking development opportunities of single and multi-unit homes in Wicklow

Organ, said: "HAIL is acutely aware of the demand for social housing in Wicklow. As a specialist housing association primarily supporting people living with mental health difficulties, we are actively looking for opportunities to provide more homes in Wicklow.

"We are encouraging local property developers, estate agents and people thinking about selling sites and properties in Wicklow, to contact us about

develop more homes. As an approved housing body, we provide social housing to people on the local housing list and work closely with the local authority on all new homes. All our properties and tenancies are professionally managed by our housing and support teams

"We are mainly aiming to purchase one and two bed units, but we will also explore three bed units. We also have

HAIL Development Manager Claire opportunities for HAIL to purchase and capacity to deliver larger development projects, Part V opportunities and repurposing of suitable vacant units. We have an extensive track record and expert resources to deliver projects efficiently and collaboratively.

"The more homes we can provide in Wicklow, means that more people and families in the county who could potentially be at risk of homelessness, have a supported stable and secure Tuesday 20th February 2024



Claire Organ, HAIL Development Manager

vacant social homes returned to active use in Wickl

A total of 540 vacant social homes were brought back into active use in County Wicklow between 2014-2023 under the Voids Programme figures released by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage show.

The figures also show homes. Making more local authorities in housing. efficient use of existing preparing vacant homes Minis housing stock is a key

action of the Gover- on the ongoing work to that $\in 8.5$ million was nmentís Housing for tackle vacancy and derespent in order to reno- All plan. The Voids liction to bring vacant vate and refurbish the Programme supports properties into re-use for Minister for Housing, for re-letting and builds Heritage and Local

OíBrien said: "Refurbishment and ment of these unoccu-

ple.

vacant properties helps to reduce pressure on communities. It prevents the decline and abandon-ment of vacant properexisting housing stock, increase supply, and ultimately, provide much ties, which, in some needed homes for peoantisocial behaviour. "Apart from address-"I commend Wicklow

these homes back into the return to use of pied social homes also active use in 2023. Their has a positive impact on efforts, will make a real difference in the lives of over 2,400 households All local authorities are encouraged to continue instances, can lead to to be as proactive as of all vacant properties

Government, Darragh ing the need for social County Council for to use through the use of communities in towns housing, the refurbish- working with us to bring the Voids Funding and cities across the Programme as well as country. Through this other programmes such Housing for All action as the Buy & Renew we have now have shiftand Repair & Lease ed to a position of planned maintenance of Schemes.

"Speed in tackling social housing stock to vacant social housing is ensure the fastest possialso critical to regenerable turnaround and re-let possible in the return tion and improving the times for social housing vitality and vibrancy of stock.'

Greystones named most expensive area for a three-bed semi

Greystones has been named as the most expensive area in the country for a three-bed semi-detached home. The Sunday Times property Guide 2024 has revealed.

Greystones (€605,000) is over €100,000 more expensive than numbers two and three on the list, Ballinlough (€490,000) and Model Farm Road (€490,000) in Cork City.

House prices nationwide are set to rise even further this year, with estate agents redicting an average rise of 4.9% over the next 12 months, according to the Price Guide, a dedicated 32-page supplement published free with the Sunday Times.

House prices in Kerry could rise by up to 15%, while Kilkenny and Laois could also see values increase by 10%. The overwhelming majority of counties are predicted to experience growth in values during 2024, with just a few areas remaining static. These include Monaghan (0%), Louth (0ñ5%) and Co. Westmeath (0-7%).

The cost of building and renovating, the trickle of properties coming to the market along with the tightening of planning laws are all factors affecting price values. It is now cheaper to buy than to build in the likes of Wexford, Waterford, Mayo and Offaly. There is strong competition for second hand homes with buyers willing to consider fixer-uppers despite the huge costs involved in renovation projects.

Second-hand bungalows are back on trend, appealing to downsizers in rural towns and villages across Ireland. Buyers in Donegal are seeking properties from the 70ís unaffected by Mica while remote workers are looking for bargain properties in Sligo.

Motivated first time buyers are taking advantage of government incentives to get their foot on the property ladder. However, many have reservations about the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant given the 10-year occupancy clause or are underestimating the amount of work needed and the cost, while some are planning to tackle construction themselves.

Returning emigrants with savings and cash buyers from Dublin and commuter counties are pricing out locals from the area. However, the National Broadband Plan has been a game changer for many rural counties as buyers seek more space, home office potential, and a better quality of life in rural counties and coastal areas.



1,428 new address points recorded in Wicklow in 2023

1,073 residential buildings were under construction in Wicklow in December 2023, while 1,428 new address points were recorded, according to the latest GeoDirectory Residential Buildings Report.

The report, prepared by EY, found that national average of 3.9%. Dublin and Leinster counties continue to record the highest levels of new construction activity in Ireland.

Of the total number of residential buildings under construction in December 2023, 15.7% were in Dublin. After Dublin, building levels were highest in Cork (12% of total), Kildare (11.9%) and Meath (6.2%).

New Additions to GeoDirectory Database

In the twelve months to December 2023, a total of 28,742 new residential address points were added to the GeoDirectory database, representing a slight increase of 0.8% compared to the corresponding period in December 2022

Over half of the new address points were located in the Greater Dublin Area of Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow (50.3%), while Dublin itself accounted for over a third(33.2%) of all new residential addresses.

Vacant and Derelict Properties

The residential vacancy rate in Wicklow was 3.3% in December 2023, lower than the

The national average vacancy rate dropped 0.1 percentage point to 3.9% in the twelve months to December 2023. After Q2 2023, this is the second consecutive report in which the residential vacancy rate has dipped below 4.0% and remains the lowest recorded by GeoDirectory since reporting started in 2013. In total, there were 81,449 vacant units

identified nationwide. The highest residential vacancy rates con-

tinue to be found in the west of the country, with Leitrim (12%), Mayo (10.7%) and Roscommon (10.4%) recording the highest levels of vacancies.

The vacancy rate in Dublin was 1.0% in December 2023, the lowest in the country, followed by Kildare (1.1%), Meath (2.4%) and Waterford (2.5%). The GeoDirectory Residential Buildings

report also found that the number of derelict residential address points fell by 7.9% in the twelve months to December 2023 with a total of 20,780 derelict units identified across the State.

The highest proportion of derelict address

points are located on the west coast of Ireland with Mayo registering the highest concentra tion, at 13.7% of national total, followed by Donegal (11.7%) and Galway (8.7%).

Average Property Prices and Transactions

There were 1,772 residential property trans-actions in Wicklow in the twelve months to

October 2023, with an average property price of €471.219. The average residential property price

increased by 4.7% to €370,709 in the twelve months to October 2023, with the average price rising in every county.

The average cost of a residential property in Dublin was €536,472, while Longford was the county with the lowest average price at €176,823.When Dublin is excluded from the study, the national average house price falls to €300,319.

The only other counties to record house prices above the State average were Wicklow (€471,219) and Kildare (€392,587). The lowest average house prices were recorded in Longford (€176,823), Leitrim (€180,952), and Roscommon (€187,609)

Boost to number of new homes commenced Commencement data shows construction of new homes up

34% in 2023 on previous year

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Darragh O'Brien said "These momentum building. Heritage has published its monthly data on the number of **Commencements Notices (residential construction starts)** for December 2023 which shows the total number of all new homes commencements in 2023.

In 2023 there have been com- Authorities. This is the highest mencement notices for 1,490 homes in Wicklow, a 34% increase on the same period in 2022 (1,111 units).

Nationally, the data shows that between January and December 2023, 32,801 Commencement Notices for new homes were received by the Building Control Government and Heritage,

number of annual commencements on record, an increase of over 21.5% compared to 2022 (26,957) and is the highest number of annual residential

commencements since records began in 2014. Minister for Housing, Local

impressive figures indicate that supply, which is key to addressing our housing needs continues to increase and that a robust stock of new housing is in the pipeline. The Government initiatives

which we introduced last year such as the development levy recent Euroconstruct report waiver and the Irish Water rebate are clearly having a positive impact of the viability of projects. Combined with the supports for First-Time Buyers such as Helpto-Buy and the First Home Scheme we can really see Minister O'Brien.

"All the key housing indicators-commencements, completions and planning permissions are trending upwards which bodes well for future supply.

"This performance is all the more impressive considering the which shows that while with total construction activity across 19 European countries is expected to fall in 2024, Ireland's construction activity is due to expand by 4.4% this year," concluded

imes

NEWS 11

'One of the most bizarre planning decisions ever made'

Independent Councillor Joe Behan has called Wicklow County Council's decision to refuse planning permission for an outdoor food court at the base of the Sugarloaf as "one of the most bizarre and completely incredible planning decisions ever made" by the Council.

The application sought permission for three trailers serving hot food and beverages, with a toilet and children's play area and picnic benches on an unused site.

The Council refused on the grounds that the development would be "contrary to the proposed planning and sustainable development of the area". The Council said it would contravene the objective to preserve the amenity, character and scenic value of the area, which is designated under the County Development Plan 2022 as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Council said the development would "form an incongruous and intrusive feature" on the landscape. The Council also had concerns that the application had insufficient information regarding access to the site and the disposal and

However, speaking at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Behan strongly disagreed with the Council's decision.

"Sixty years ago that very site was the site of a garage, a petrol filling station, a shop and a seating area," said Cllr Behan. "And it was good enough sixty years ago, but, as far as the plan-ners in Wicklow County Council are concerned, it's not good enough today to provide a facility like that in such a magnificent and scenic area, for people to be able to go to the toilet, buy an ice cream, or whatever the case might be. I do not understand it. But I do believe it brings the planning system into disrepute, when ridiculous decisions like that are made, and I wonder whether planners were aware of the history of that site, because I certainly am



Grace Woodroofe, Nana Bonsu, Charlie Burke and Tawfik Altemimi at the Smiley Pancake Fun Day in the De la Salle Pastoral Centre in Wicklow Town

'Urgent investigation needed into Rathdrum power outages'

Deputy Jennifer Whitmore, Social Democrats TD for Wicklow of any duration occur, it has exorbitant cost of living these has called on the ESB to investigate the frequent and lengthy immediate adverse effects on outages in the Rathdrum area as a matter of urgency.

Iennifer Whitmore TD

Speaking on the issue, Deputy Whitmore said: "Constituents from Rathdrum have contacted my office raising this issue. They have experienced upwards of 30 power outages over the past 14 months in the Rathdrum area with the latest outage occurring last Friday evening for a period of two hours. Over the past year and a half, these outages have lasted anywhere from one hour to two days with constituents saying that it has now reached the point where they are expecting the outages and are having to plan with that expectation in mind.

"It is a totally unreasonable sit-

peopleís lives in many ways. Without a reliable power source, people's health can be so negatively impacted. To have to

endure this unreliability for over a year now is unacceptable, and especially so for medically vulnerable people.

"These relentless outages are also taking their toll on families, especially those with young children. The demands on a power source in a house with young children cannot be underestimated. Not knowing if there will be power when your children need to be fed, or when a baby needs a bottle causes a lot of unnecessary stress on parents. Not to mention the amount of waste with food uation for the people of Rathdrum spoiling in both fridges and freez-to have to endure. When outages ers. The waste, in light of the

days, is a crying shame.

Deputy Whitmore went on to say; "Frequent Power outages like those experienced by people in Rathdrum also have a massive impact on people's ability to run businesses in the town, or as is true with a lot of residents in Rathdrum, to work

from home. Not being able to rely on something as basic as power in your own home during the working week changes every thing about how a person can approach their working week, or how a business can take a booking or complete a service. "It is very clear that something

is not working with the electricity infrastructure in Central Wicklow and I have contacted the ESB looking for clarity on the matter," concludes Whitmore



Rathdrum

People urged to have their say on Blessington Town Plan



pre-draft consultation phase of the Blessington Local Area Plan. The consultation phase Blessington," said Cllr been in touch. I have had begins on 21st February Timmins

Cllr Edward Timmins, Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District, is encouraging people to make submissions as part of the

and runs until Wednesday "The town is set to 3rd April. An online consultation portal is availand we can have an input able on the Wicklow to ensure this growth is for County Council website. the better. I will be mak-The online consultation ing a submission to extend portal sets out the key top the Luas from Saggart to

ics that the plan will Blessington and a park address and asks a number and ride in the town. of sample questions for "I already succeeded in people to consider, when having the Luas extension making a submission. to Blessington inserted in General submissions can the current Wicklow also be made through the County Council Develportal with all ideas welopment plan. I recently comed. Submissions are recorded a video on this topic and it has already invited from everyone.

"I encourage people to received more than 1000 make submissions on their views on Facebook and thoughts on the future of several local people have plan.

individual meetings with commuters including stu grow in the coming years dents and they are all and we can have an input eager to see action on this issue. We must be ambitious for public transport in this area.'

A drop-in public infor mation day will be held on Friday 1st March in The Coimln Centre, Main Street, Blessington (W91 F77F) from 10.00 to 13.00 and then from 16.00 - 19.00. The plan team will be available to provide advice to the public on how to make a submission and to provide any information on the new

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

Quinsborough Road, Bray Section between Station Road and Strand Road.

Period of closure

From Wednesday 6th March to Friday 14th June 2024.

24 hour closure.

Alternative Routes

Diversion route via R766 - Strand Road to Putland Road to Meath Road and Adelaide Road

For vehicles not exceeding 3.2m in height diversion will be via Sidmonton Avenue.

Reason for Closure

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



Katie Kenny, Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District Cllr Melanie Corrigan and Lorna Kelly at the Wicklow County Council Tourism Network & Workshop event at Beyond the Trees, Avondale

'A personal, caring one-to-one service at your local CIC'

Your local Citizens Information Centre (CIC) provides a free and confidential information, advice and advocacy service to the people of County Wicklow to enable you to avail of your civil and social rights and entitlements. It is an independent and impartial service and is aimed at meeting the needs of our customers.

"A personal, caring, one-to-one service is provided by our team of trained information-providers who will help with answering your queries on a wide range of topics including Social Welfare, Employment Rights, Consumer Advice, Housing, Health Issues, Disability Issues, Family Matters, Immigrant Issues, Local Information and more.

"We will also help you with form filling, help with queries and provide assistance with writing letters all in the strictest confidence. We will also advocate (represent) on your behalf where necessary

"Specialist Services include Free Legal Advice and Domiciliary Care Allowance clinics. We cur-rently provide a virtual CIC service which operates from the library in Wicklow Town every Thursday afternoon.

"Please drop in or telephone us for opening hours

or check our website. Our Centres are wheelchair accessible.

Funded by the Citizens Information Board, Co. Wicklow CICs are part of South Leinster Citizens Information Service, a regional service with CICs located throughout South Leinster.

• Bray CIC: 2 The Boulevard Shopping Centre, Quinsboro Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow . Tel: 0818 07 6780; Email: bray@citinfo.ie
Arklow CIC, 73 Lower Main Street, Arklow, Co.

0818 07 6750; Email Wicklow. Tel: arklow@citinfo.ie

Alternatively, you can call the Citizens Information Phone Service on 0818 07 4000, Monday to Friday, 9am-8pm or visit our website www.citizensinforma-

Harris tours Washington, D.C. and Boston on trade mission

Minister Simon Harris was in the US last week where he visited Washington DC and Boston as part of a week-long trade mission.

Ireland marks 100 years of diplomatic relations with the United States this year and the Minister's visit was to celebrate this milestone, as well as launch Ireland's new international Talent and Innovation strategy, Global Citizens 2030 in the US.

Before embarking on his trip, Minister Harris stated "We have strong economic links with the United States but it is essential we continue to grow and develop this relationship. We see significant opportunities in the area of education and research. In this regard, I am very pleased that I am being accompanied on this mission with representatives from our higher education institutions and our science agency

"We will use this opportunity to embed the strong bonds our two counties share but also how we can expand them to benefit both our economies and societies.'

The Minister began his programme

February where he officially launched the 30th year of the Washington-Ireland programme.

Speaking in Washington, Minister Harris said "I'm delighted to be here today to celebrate the magnificent work done by the Washington Ireland Programme since its inception in 1995. Today I am announcing extra funding for the programme. This funding will go towards driving to objectives of the programme which provide young students from each corner of Ireland with huge educational opportunity in a capital steeped

in political history and significance. "In the past 30 years the proamme has made a significant contribution in preparing future generations to carry out important roles in leadership and in building and maintaining good working relationships between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

"Following the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and in Washington DC on Tuesday 13th Executive last week, WIP's vision for



Minister Simon Harris

a peaceful Northern Ireland and Ireland, promoted through a network of leaders North and South who can work together to build relationships across diverse communities is more important and relevant now than ever. It is a key piece of a complex jigsaw to create and foster a positive environ-

ment to work on a cross-community Irish higher education institutions basis.

"The additional funding recognises the work and educational opportunities offered by the programme and I hope it will be of benefit to many in the class of 2024."

Speaking following the announcement, Nicola Skelly, Executive Director of Washington Ireland Programme, said: "The Washington Ireland Program welcome the announcement from Minister Harris on the increase in support for our Emerging Leaders program as we celebrate our 30th anniversary. The Irish government has been the longest Ireland's policies on international edustanding supporter of WIP and has enabled us to develop future leaders from across the island of Ireland. With this support, we can continue to develop young people to become the change-makers and leaders of tomorrow, delivering on the business of peacebuilding and public service each day

The Minister then visited both Georgetown and Howard University, accompanied on the mission by senior academics from eight publicly funded Boston on Thursday 15th February,

both universities and discussed deepening the collaboration between Irish and US higher education institutions.

During his time in Washington, the Minister also travelled to Capitol Hill to take high-level meetings with the Under Secretary at the Department of Education, James Kvaal, Director of the National Science Foundation Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan, and Deputy Director for Policy at the Office of Science and Technology and science policy advisor to the President, Kei Koizumi, to discuss cation, talent, research and innovation

The Minister met with several members of the United States Congress, including members of the House Committee for Science, Space, and Technology, the House Committee for Education and the Workforce, as well as Democratic cochair of the Friends of Ireland Caucus, Representative Richard Neal.

where he met with the Special Envoy He met with senior leadership in to Northern Ireland, Joe Kennedy III, to discuss developments in Northern Ireland

> He also visited the Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC), a start-up incubator and co-working space located between Bostonís Downtown Crossing and Financial District.

> While in Boston, Minister Harris also meet with Jeevan Ramapriya, the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment (MOITI) to discuss the economic relationship between Massachusetts-Ireland and to explore possible opportunities for growth

Finally, he visited Northeastern University, where he inspected the EXP Building, Northeastern's new Science and Technology research building. He also met with the university's Provost, Prof David Madigan to discuss the strong academic relationship between Northeastern and Ireland's higher education institutions, as well as explore opportunities for The Minister then travelled to increased joint research projects and partnerships

Sinn Féin leader visits Bray and Greystones

Sinn Féin Party Leader Mary Lou McDonald TD accompanied local Wicklow Sinn Fein TD John Brady on a visit to a number of groups and businesses in Wicklow last Thursday, including the Cairdeas Clubhouse in Bray, Coolplanet in Powerscourt, and Greystones Family Resource Centre, before they both addressed a packed meeting of party members and local election candidates last night.

Deputy Brady said: "I and my party colleagues, including our strong team of local election candidates here in Wicklow were delighted to be able to welcome our party president Mary Lou McDonald on her visit to Wicklow today. Over the course of a busy day we met with a number of local groups and businesses here in the county, in Bray, Grevstones, and Powerscourt.

"We also met with party members and local election candidates, later in the evening, where the large crowd, the engagement, and the enthusiasm in the room, spoke volumes of the desire and optimism of our party here in Wicklow to work on delivering the type of change that the electorate are demanding.

want to thank everybody who helped in facilitating the visit of the Sinn Féin President

here today. The cross range of groups and business we visited highlighted the vibrancy and community spirit that exists across the county of Wicklow, alongside a cutting-edge approach to one of the most critical issues of our day, where we were able to see a local company based in Powerscourt developing and delivering real solutions in the battle to lower carbon emissions.

"Sinn Féin has a vision for a new Ireland, where a brighter future can be built around a sense of community, of fairness, and optimism. The belief in which, was clearly evident when Mary Lou and I met last night with our members and supporters, and the Sinn Féin team of local election candidates here in Wicklow, who are determined to deliver on that change for Wicklow.'



Deputy Mary Lou McDonald and John Brady at the Cairdeas Clubhouse in Bray

Times **NEWS 13** Tuesday 20th February 2024 inn Féin select Wicklow East candidates

Wicklow Sinn Fein TD John Brady has offered his warm congratulation to Abbie O'Loughlin and Anthony Hill, who have been selected to contest the 2024 local elections as the Sinn Féin candidates for Wicklow East.

He described both candidates, who are running for the first time, as young, vibrant, and committed to their local area.

Deputy Brady said: "I am abso-lutely delighted to be in the position to offer my congratulations to both Abbie, and Anthony, following their selection at recent conventions in the Wicklow East constituency to represent Sinn Féin in the next local elections.

"Abbie is from Rathnew and is currently in her final year studying History and Politics in UCD. She is an active and enthusiastic member of the GAA and has played for Rathnew ladies GAA.

"Anthony is from Wicklow Town, and is employed as a social care worker, supporting adults with autism. He is also someone who actively gets involved with volunteering his time with young people.'

Abbie and Anthony are committed to their local communities. And offer the opportunity to Wicklow East to elect two new and strong advocates for the area. They are candidates of real potential."

Abbie O'Loughlin said: "It is an absolute privilege and honour to be selected by my party colleagues to go forward along with Anthony Hill to contest the local elections on behalf of Sinn Féin here in the Wicklow East area. I am very passionate about my community, and I believe that Sinn Féin has the energy, leadership, and vision to bring about real change in Wicklow. I want to see more resources being put in place locally for our young people. I will be looking for recreational and sports facilities in the area.

"As a young person, I want to

Deputy Brady continued: "Both I want to help end the need for young people to emigrate. I want to have the opportunity to own my own home in my own community, with access to proper services and amenities."

Anthony Hill said: "I want to echo Abbie's comments and say how proud I am to be selected as part of our two-person team here in the Wicklow East constituency to contest the local elections this coming June. I entered politics to help create more opportunities that empower our young people. To help them to grow into active members of society and to realise their full potential.

"I want to see my community prosper. To be a place where young people can be optimistic about their futures. I am determined to bring about real and positive change in our local communibuild a life within my community, ty through action not just words."



Deputy John Brady with Sinn Féin Wicklow East candidates Abbie O'Loughlin and Anthony Hill



Cllr Mark Barry

SocDems confirm Barry will run as Greystones candidate

The Wicklow Branch of the Social Democrats formally announced the selection of Cllr Mark Barry as their candidate for the 2024 local elections in the Greystones municipal district.

"I am

The decision was unity National School. made during a selection convention held in Greystones. Cllr Barry, a resident of Greystones for delighted and honoured the past 19 years, is a to have been selected as well-known figure in the the Social Democrats' local community, particularly in GAA circles. He Greystones Municipal currently serves as the District in the upcoming manager of the Eire Og Camogie team and holds the position of vice-chair at the Eire Og club. Additionally, Cllr Barry is an active member of the board of management at Greystones Comm-

Delgany, Kilcoole, and Newcastle is vibrant and growing rapidly. "However, we often face challenges in terms

Expressing his grati-

tude and excitement, Cllr

representative for the

local elections. Our com-

munity in Greystones,

of lacking facilities,

Barry stated.

amenities, better transportation services, and infrastructure to support the well-being of our res-

prioritizing the development of bus services, walking and cycling paths, and providing idents. I believe that by greater support

improve the quality of its foundation life for all residents we can build a stronger and more inclusive communi-

ty. Cllr Barry has been an orating closely on variactive member of the ous campaigns in the Social Democrats since

area

He has also been a valuable member of Wicklow TD Jennifer Whitmore's team, collab-

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Orla Finn has announced that she will be running in the upcoming local elections as an Independent candidate for the Greustones, Delganu, Kilcoole, Newcastle and Killadreenan areas. Orla has lived in Greustones for over 25 years with her husband and 4 children, and has dedicated herself to various committees and organisations in order to improve our community. She is currently a Board member of Wicklow Dementia Support, is a Co-founder and Chairperson of the North Wicklow Women's Shed and was a member of the team which delivered the inclusive South Beach playground in Greystones. Orla (second from left) is pictured with supporters at her campaign launch.

Times Tuesday 20th February 2024 **Transformational higher education courses** announced for students with an intellectual disability



Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD has announced the roll-out of higher education courses for students with an intellectual disability. The courses are to be delivered in 10 higher education colleges across the country and will provide significant opportunities for students. In addition, Minister Harris is can take their place among our col-

announcing E1.8 million for inclu-sion measures including to roll out sensory maps of college campuses to support autistic learners and for antiracism measures particularly to challenge racism for members of the Traveller and Roma communities.

Speaking today, Minister Harris said: iWe know that people with an intellectual disability have not been represented adequately in Higher Education. We want and need our College Campuses to reflect communities.

"Today, we are making a change Today we are opening doors and opportunities so that these learners

lege communities.That is why we are announcing expanded Higher Education course provision today with expected investment of over €10 million to support learners with an intellectual disability.

"Up until now, courses have been limited in location and availability but this investment will help change that and ensure there is equality of opportunity for every person in our country."

The programmes are spanned over 10 different higher education institutions and are due to commence in academic year 2024/25. Approximately 150 students can be

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, expected to enrol in the first year of provision.Under this initiative, the courses will be between one and two years in length. The student will apply directly to the college involved and can avail of specific

storal and financial supports. Minister Harris added: "These courses have been designed with the three-year pilot to support an learner at heart. When given the opportunity, students with an intellectual disability can thrive. Access to higher education can lead to employment. It can transform the lives of students and their families as well as society as a whole."

Minister of State with special responsibility for Disability Anne Rabbitte added: "Under the National Access Plan 2022-28, funding was secured under PATH Strand 4 to support inclusion for all. Path 4 has involved a two-phase programme supporting inclusive, universally

designed higher education environ-

ments and course provision for students with intellectual disabilities." The first phase of funding was

distributed in 2022/2023 and supported higher education institutions to embed universal design approaches and inclusive practices.

Phase 2 will be implemented as a enhancement of course provision for students with intellectual disabilities.

The programmes were recommended for funding by an independent expert panel following a competitive call for proposals under strand 4 of the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH), managed by the Higher Education Authority.

The approved courses have been specifically designed to meet the diverse range of needs of students with intellectual disabilities and will include the provision of financial, pastoral, and educational supports.

Dr Louise Callinan, Head of Access Policy at the Higher Education Authority commented: "PATH 4 is a key enabler of the Inclusivity goal in the National Access Plan 2022-2028. This pilot expansion of provision for students with intellectual disabilities being delivered across our higher educa tion institutions will have a transfor mative impact on participating students and on the wider higher education community. The programmes are designed to enhance opportunities and outcomes for students with intellectual disabilities and include a tailored suite of supports to enable participating students to thrive within the higher education environment.

"This investment will also sup port future evidence-informed policy on the successful participation of students with intellectual disabilities in higher education to ensure sustainable long-term outcomes

'Ireland must foster creative thinking skills in students or fall behind'

Ireland must foster creative thinking skills in students or fall behind socially and economically, according to the team behind award-winning educational initiative, The B!G Idea

Publishing its Impact Report 2022-2023, Kim Mackenzie-Doyle, CEO and founder of The B!G Idea said that cultivating creative thinking is not just beneficial, it's a critical skill for society recognised by influential organisations like the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Forbes.

"It enhances confidence, empathy, collaboration, well-being, and intrinsic motivation for learning," said Mackenzie-Doyle.

The B!G Idea is a unique and pioneering educational programme that aligns with the Department of Education's commitment to integrating creative think-ing into the curriculum. The HundrED Global Collection 2024 which features 100 of the most impactful and scalable education innovations from around the world, recognised The B!G Idea last year ñ a significant accomplishment as the only Irish initiative featured in the top 100.

Facilitated by secondary schools teachers, usually during Transition Year and Leaving Cert Applied, as well as Youthreach programmes, the initiative connects 15-19 year old students with industry professionals (The B!G Idea 'mentors') who share their experience, knowledge and methodologies used in their professions. The programme ignites studentis creative thinking as they work collaboratively to develop innovative solutions to societal challenges. The professionals (or mentors) are supported to share their experience and skills before taking part in the programme, providing them with an opportunity to gain valuable mentoring and coaching experience.

Since 2021 100+ schools in 23 counties across the island of Ireland have participated in The B!G Idea educational programme. The initiativeís 2022-2023 Impact Report outlines how 6500+ 15-19 years have learned new life skills - transformative creative thinking and problem-solving abilities. 750+ industry mentors from every sector in Ireland have participated.

Mackenzie-Doyle continued, "Creative thinking is the top skill required by 2025, as identified by the WEF, LinkedIn and Forbes, yet we do not teach it in our schools. We simply must think differently about education. We currently teach our students in silos or subjects with an emphasis on rote learning. This is detrimental to creative thinking, building barriers to neurological pathways. Our vision is a world where our young people, no matter what their background, have the creative thinking ability to tackle and solve the complex challenges that they will face throughout their lives.



Prestigious national award for Greystones innovators

Two Transition Year students from Greystones Community College received top marks for their innovative entry in the Irish Environmental Innovation Awards for 2024. The national competition, in association with Agri Aware and BiOrbic, crowned the two Wicklow students as National Environmental Innovator runners up at the Board Bia Global Hub in Dublin last week

4th year students at Greystones Community College Haylie Foley and Holly Cheevers and their teacher Ms Micaela Buckley claimed the overall third place nationally in the prestigious com-petition. More than 9,500 Transition Year students from 185 schools across the country took part in the programme nation wide. Eight top group finalists from around the country were chosen to attend the national final event and showcase their idea to a number of leading agri-food stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to meet like-minded peers and to demonstrate their learning over the course of the programme.

The Greystones students came up with a groundbreaking way to tackle the issue of food waste by developing their own community cookhouse. Their idea is to provide access to a community kitchen for those struggling financially or those that may be experiencing homelessness. The community cookhouse would be fully stocked and open to all members of the public. Foods would be supplied from supermarket waste and leftover household foods that are still safe to eat. The students identified a problem and use creativity, initiative and their knowledge of sustainability and the environment to develop the community cookhouse prototype. Minister of State at the

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine for Land Use and Biodiversity, Pippa Hackett commented "I am always fascinated to get a sense of what our students identify as the biggest challenges facing the agricultural sector, as well as their ideas about the potential solutions. I was particularly taken by the fact that 9,500 pupils participated in this initiative. These are the farmers, researchers, and policy makers of the next generation, so it is hugely



4th year students at Greystones Community College Haylie Foley and Holly Cheevers and their teacher Ms Micaela Buckley

encouraging to see such a level of interest among our students in addressing food waste, water pollution, biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions".

Principal of Greystones Community College Mr. Ruairi Farrell was particularly proud of his student's success "For our students and our school to be on such a prestigious stage and to claim such an award is a remarkable achievement. Our students excel in all areas of extra-curricular activities but under the leadership of Environmental Action Teacher Ms. Micaela Buckley, the students at Greystones Community College have achieved magnificent things, from working locally with the Tidy Towns and environmental groups through to different school wide environmental initiatives. We are very proud of Holly and Haylie

for this fantastic success"

Agri Aware Director Marcus O'Halloran said of the event: "It was an incredible day at the Bord Bia Global Hub to witness eight fantastic projects from schools right across the country. The judges were very impressed with the calibre of the work students presented on the day and it made for a very difficult decision who to crown the winners of the programme. However, students from Greystones Community College demonstrated a need for a solution to a challenge that many of us thought we had conquered, but in reality that isn't the case' Director of BiOrbic, Kevin

O'Connor added: "It is great to see such a diversity of fantastic ideas from young environmental innovators to address challenges as diverse as silage run off, food use efficiency to benefit the vulnera-

ble in society and reducing confusion about waste management.

The topics covered in the final ists' projects ranged from implementing proper waste disposal systems and promoting biodiversity in their schools, reusing plastic bale wrap to be recycled into insulating materials, and coming up with alternatives to reduce the tonnes of waste generated every year from the confectionery industry.

Agri Aware Director Marcus O'Halloran concluded "It was brilliant once again to see so many students participate in the programme this year. Greystones Community College in Wicklow, St Tiernan's College in Mayo and Scoil Mhuire in Meath were very worthy finalists and a big congratulations to them and their teachers and schools on their suc cess

Times **Rowing fever** sweeps Arklow

Secondary schools engage in Get Going Get Rowing programme

Secondary students in Arklow recently had the opportunity to dive into the for youths to explore alternative sports." world of rowing thanks to the Get Going Get Rowing programme, integrated into their PE curriculum.

Coaches from Rowing Ireland visited to Glenart College and Arklow CBS ñ delivering a comprehensive 4-to-6-week rowing experience to approximately 250 students.

The rowing event held on Wednesday, February 7th, marked a milestone in this initiative, with it being the first time it was held in Wicklow. "It was a fantastic opportunity for boys to represent their school who wouldnít typically play on a traditional team sport," expressed Declan Kennedy, a PE teacher at Arklow CBS.

"The Get Going Get Rowing programme three local schools - St Mary's College, opens doors for students to explore rowing within their school's PE schedule, providing a unique and engaging experience," remarked Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy. Chief Executive of Wicklow County

Council, Emer O'Gorman, highlighted the programme's impact on student participa-tion and physical activity, stating: "The Get Going Get Rowing programme demonstrates our commitment to promoting active lifestyles and offering opportunities low Active Wicklow on social media.

Wicklow Sports & Recreational Partnership Coordinator, Aisling Hubbard, commended the dedication of both students and coaches and thanked Rowing Ireland for their support and collaboration to deliver

Rowing Leinster Coordinator, Aoife Byrne, presenting medals to the top performers in each category, recognising their outstanding achievement and participation in this pro gramme

nities from Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership visit www.wicklowlsp.ie or fol-

Tony Richardson Owner & Chairman, Bray Wanderers FC & Cllr. Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council

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this rowing initiative to schools in Arklow. The event concluded with Get Going Get

To keep up to date with activity opportu-

Ruth McDonagh named Wicklow recipient of Volunteers in Sport Award

The Federation of Irish Sport today full-season calendar, the being recognised at the announced the County recipients of the 2023 Volunteers in Sport Awards proudly supported by the National Network of 29 Local Sports Partnerships. The County Wicklow award for 2023 has been awarded to Ruth McDonagh of Bray Hockey Club.

Recognising the depth community development. and breadth of volunteering in sporting communities nationwide, these dedicated volunteers will Hockey Club. Over two be celebrated at a national awards ceremony in tently stepped up and has Dublin on Thursday 29th is Minister Thomas Sport and Physical Education, which is testament to the commitment supporting and recognising the vital role of vol-

group are now full members of Bray Hockey Club. Not only this, she responsible for was spear-heading the Senior Ladies participating in the Leinster Indoor

Hockey League. Truly dedicated to the sport she The recipient of the award for Co. Wicklow is has gone on to volunteer Ruth McDonagh of Bray and provincial and national levels of the decades. Ruth has consisgame

The economic significance of volunteering in sport cannot be overstatvalue of $\in 1.5$ billion underscores the immense Irish sporting landscape. unteers in advancing years of age. Currently in In addition to the time and passion of sports participation and its second season, with a county award winners those involved in sport In addition to the time and passion of

locally and to say, 'thank ceremony, anticipation will be high as one exceptional individual will be awarded with the overall Outstanding Volunteer Award.

you' for their dedication. Commenting on the

announcement of the list of recipients, Head of Sport, Louth LSP, Louth County Council and Federation CEO Mary member of the judging panel Graham Russell O'Connor commented; We are looking forward to celebrating the excepstated, "The 2023 Voluntional contributions made teers in Sport Awards by volunteers in sport serve as a reminder of the power of volunteerfrom all over the country. ing in sport, celebrating individuals whose unwavering dedication enriches lives, strengthens communities, and enc ourages a culture of active living.

Council extends Bray Wanderers lease

Last Monday Wicklow County Council voted to extend the existing lease at Bray Wanderers Carlisle Ground to 35 years. The original lease was issued on the 9th of February 2001 for a 35 year period. An additional 23 years were approved today which allows the Club to now plan for the future.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow Council and Bray East Ward Councillor, Aoife Flynn Kennedy visited the grounds at their recent open day. She stated, It is clear that the new owners are very much focused on the community and how to improve facilities, so as to increase community engagement and

Cllr. Flynn Kennedy noted that the conditions of the lease were not changed and will not allow commercial development or the building of housing on the site. The new lease however will allow the Club to apply for Sports Capital Funding and make financial investments in the existing facilities which she noted is very welcome. Cllr. Flynn Kennedy also welcomed the recent announcement of the partnership with Ardmore Rovers Football Club and the Walking Football Group. She stated, 'such initiatives increase the communities connection with the club and grounds, I hope that their efforts are rewarded with an increase support in our local team and more support at matches'.

Working behind the scenes volunteers play a volunteered as team cap-February 2024. The invit- tain, social secretary, regcrucial role in fostering ed special guest speaker istrations secretary, ed, it has an estimated community engagement, coach, umpire, PRO and promoting physical activannually to the Irish ity, and driving the suc-economy. This figure cess of sporting events Byrne, Minster of State Vice - President, Ruth with responsibility for played a major part in establishing Bray Hockey nationwide, they are truly Club's HockeyID team, social and economic #DedicatedToTheDedithe Brayvers, which has benefits derived from the cated. The awards proinvaluable contributions mise to be yet again at government level to introduced hockey to local persons with intelof volunteers across the another remarkable lectual disability from six event acknowledging the

County Coun-

Club Development Small Grant Scheme open for applications

Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership has announced the opening of the 2024 Club **Development Small Grant Scheme.**

€1,500 per club available

Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership of club volunteers supports sports clubs to • Delivery of pro-provide opportunities for grammes or initiatives people to participate in that will increase club organised sport and membership physical activity.

will lead to an increase sports clubs across sive section Wicklow.

open to applications until affiliated to a National club by training or Wednesday, March 20th, Governing Body that is next. There will be a recognised by Sport maximum allocation of Ireland. member · Programmes or initiatives

This scheme will have a focus on the following: inclusion of new commu-• Training and education nities, women, or those with disabilities

klow cil, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, welcomed the

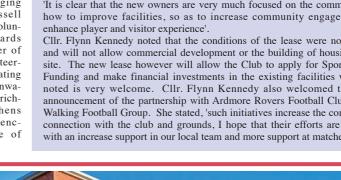
• Small equipment pur-This Club Develop- chases to facilitate ment Grant Scheme aims increased membership or to support initiatives that development of a new section of the club, eg a in participation levels in female, youth or inclu-

members. Sport plays • Youth development such a significant role in This scheme is open to programmes to support the lives of people in lowlsp.ie

This scheme will be sports clubs who are the youth section of the Wicklow and I would encourage all clubs to upskilling the youth apply.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, with a focus on Emer O'Gorman, said: "These supports now available to clubs have come at a time when the Cathaoirleach of Wic- cost of living is rising and clubs throughout the county are struggling. This grant scheme further opening of the 2024 highlights the supports grants saying: "This is a Wicklow County Council is making available to most welcome opportunity for our sports clubs to clubs, through Wicklow access funding to support Sports & Recreation the participation of their Partnership.

Application forms can be found at www.wick-





There was a brilliant turnout for the Allianz Cumann na mBunscol event for 3rd and 4th class boys as 150 hurlers took part in blitzes in both Greystones CNS and An Tóchar GAA Club. Teams from St. Laurence's N.S, Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath, Greystones CNS, Kilcoole P.S and Greystones Educate Together participated in Greystones while St. Patrick's N.S, Holy Rosary N.S and Laurence O'Toole's N.S took part in An Tóchar.



Join Ireland's King Of Swing Luke Thomas and his band The Swing Cats for their KINGS OF SWING TOUR this Spring (Whale Theatre, Friday 1st & Saturday 2nd March, 8pm, doors 7pm Tickets \in 30). The Best In The Business are back with a brand new show celebrating 100 years of SWING music with a musical timeline of SWING classics from the 1920s to the modern day. Featuring all your favourite SWING and Big Band songs like Sing Sing, Puttin On The Ritz, Mack The Knife to Crooning classics like Mr. Bojangles, Fly Me To The Moon, New York plus many more performed by THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS.

Kaleidoscope **Night presents Norma Winstone**

Whale Theatre, Thursday 7th March, 8pm (doors 7pm) Tickets €25 available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for any returns.

Described as "one of the glories of contemporary jazz" (Jazz Journal), Norma Winstone MBE is a multi-award-winning vocalist who has enjoyed a career spanning more than 50 years.

Presented by Kaleidoscope Night, Norma will be joined by long-time collaborator and friend Tommy Halferty on guitar, and Steve Watts on double bass, to perform music both old and new.

Although known initially for evolving her own wordless approach to improvisation, Norma Winstone's extraordinary versatility means she is equally at home with the standards repertoire, per forming with small groups, orchestras and big bands. Among other accolades, she was awarded an MBE in the Oueen's Birthday Honours List in 2007, and she also received a Jazz FM Lifetime Achievement Award in 2022.

The Kaleidoscope Night series presents classical and contemporary music alongside experimental, jazz and folk music in a unique, intimate and informal setting. A variety of music for the curious ear, the series boasts performances from the country's top classical music performers and composers. The series is curated by cellist Lioba Petrie, managed by Caterina Schembri with SM management by Lina Andonovska.



Norma Winstone

Seed funding scheme for West Wicklow artists opens for applications

Creative Places Baltinglass, under the Seed Funding Scheme 2024, invites applications from artists of all disciplines based in Baltinglass and West Wicklow.

The fund opened on Monday, 12th February, and closes on sity and cultural groups. Sunday, 24th March, at 4 pm. One Awarded projects c award of \in 5,000 and three awards of $\in 2.000$ will be made with a total fund of €11,000 to be allocated under this round.

high-quality applications featuring dren and young people. innovative ways to increase engagement between people, arts, culture, heritage, climate action,

community arts, heritage, biodiver-

Awarded projects can include artistic interventions, socially engaged arts projects, perfor-mances, exhibitions, podcasts, diversity and inclusion initiatives, The fund is intended to receive and creative engagements for chil-

The first round of the scheme was introduced in 2023 and saw five Baltinglass artists receiving biodiversity and creativity. The €1,000 each to get their creative

the success of the first round, the investment

The application form can be accessed via Creative Places Baltinglass website (Creative Places Baltinglass) and has to be submitted online via the Submittable platform. The application deadline is Sunday, 24th, March 2024, at 4 pm. Projects must take place in the Baltinglass townland area.

There will be a Seed Funding Clinic as part of the next Artist's Gathering and Networking event

March, at 7.30 pm, in Horan's, revised scheme will offer almost Baltinglass, to give the potential Building Bridges. double the $\in 6,000.00$ first-round applicants an opportunity to ask Led by Wicklow County any questions related to the application process while networking with their local peers.

The event will also feature some of the successful applicants from 2023: Eoin O'Malley with his happening Tracks; Gerard Gormley with his film Trash; John Hughes with his film The Fuel of Youth; Mairead Kelly (Inisfail Social Circle) with her Audio Tour for The Hillfort Capital of Ireland; Siobh·n Madden with her Community Dye Garden project

rative intercultural music project artists

Council's Arts Office, the scheme has been designed to support the creative community in Baltinglass and is an important part of the delivery of the Creative Places Baltinglass programme, funded by the Arts Council of Ireland.

The Creative Places initiative provides an opportunity for places that had not benefitted from sustained arts investment in the past to develop their local arts programmes, explore the existing cultural strengths, empower commuscheme is open to artists and local projects off the ground. Following taking place on Monday, 11th of and Mark Caplice with his collabo- nity participation and support local Development Plan.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, said: "I'm delighted to see the investment in pairing local artists and the community in Baltinglass.'

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, extended her best wishes to the Community of Baltinglass and expressed her hopes that "the Seed Funding Scheme will generate creative and cultural capital beneficial to Baltinglass artists and will have maximum impact for the town in alignment with the County

Fresh Film Festival bringing young talent to the screens

Fresh Film has announced a new partnership with Omniplex Cinema Group for this year's Fresh International Film Festival and Ireland's Young Filmmaker of the Year Awards.

be announced shortly.

partnership

International Festival, which runs Limerick in April. from April 15th - 21st, 'Generation Fr Year Awards (IYFTYs), of the worldis leading annual film events for recognises exceptional world.

This new partnership be an incredible opportu-Omniplex across Ireland in March, the public and for film with Fresh International Festival

This will be the 28th maker of the Year people for Fresh Film. audiences across Ireland.' edition of the Fresh Awards taking place at Details of this nation- Awards on the nigh Film Omniplex Cinema in

'Generation Fresh', a 2024. At the heart of fes- morning of Fresh films, Director of Fresh Film many more, as well as tival week is Ireland's screening at selected said "We are delighted specialist awards includ-Young Filmmaker of the Omniplex Cinemas with this exciting new ing the Radharc Trust across Ireland, will take globally regarded as one place on Sunday, April Omniplex Cinema Group. the RTE 60 Second 21. This will be a new collaborative initiative to young people, which bring the superb work of ers, fostering creativity young Irish filmmakers filmmaking by creators to the big screen. This for their work. As an aged 7 to 18, from event, generously facili- independent, island-wide Ireland and across the tated and supported by Omniplex Cinemas, will

Irish-owned and operated cinema group, Omniplex shortly, are the perfect partner for locations to screen their work to ment and support in nurturing Ireland's future fans to enjoy a fascinatfilm talent pool and for and ing selection of short enabling young filmmak-Ireland's Young Film- films made by young ers to engage with cinema March.

Awards on the night

wide screening event will include Best Cinema-tography, Best Art Direction. Jayne Foley, Artistic Best Screenplay and with Award for documentaries, Award, and the RTE Together, we aim to empower young filmmak- Factual Award, along

with the much-coveted and providing a platform peer-to-peer Audience Award, Further new Irish screen industry-supported awards will be announced

The Regional Finals of will see regional screen- nity for a number of Fresh Film, and we are Ireland's Young Filmings take place in key young Irish filmmakers grateful for their invest- maker of the Year will take place in March. The short films selected for the IYFTYs in April will be announced on 20th



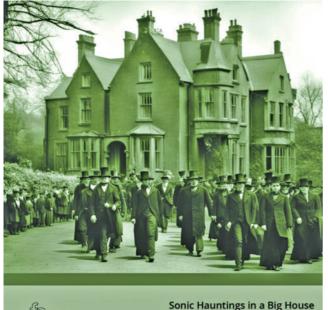
Times Tuesday 20th February 2024 The Listening Group

Mermaid Arts Centre, 25th February. 2pm. FREE.

The Listening Group is Mermaid Arts Centre's new sound art gathering, inviting artists working with sound to share new work, influences and discoveries with peers, sound art devotees and those keen to discover more.

inaugural live listen event featuring an exclusive sneak preview of Joseph Young's forthcoming album Gardens, Young devised both a 'Sonic Hauntings in a Big House', geolocated soundscape in drawn from his recent PhD Killruddery's grounds and this research project 'The

The Group launches with this Ancestors'. Through exploring the ther proposes a spectral glimpse of extensive family archive held at Bray's Killruddery House & accompanying record, which fur-



a lost past.

In keeping with this investigation of place through audio, the live listen will be followed by discussion led by Joseph and Anthony, interspersed with audio clips from artists who have influenced their practice including Aeron Bergman, Mark Fisher & Justin Barton, The Caretaker, Janet Cardiff, Laurie Anderson, Drew Mullholland, Peter Cusack, Warrington-Runcorn New Town Development Plan, Cathy Lane, Pat Collins & Tadhg O'Sullivan, Chris Watson, Brian Harnetty, Ernest Hood, Dallas Simpson, Graeme Miller, Glenn Gould and Brian Eno. (See below for Listening links) The digital version of 'Sonic

Hauntings in a Big House' will be released on 4th April on the Farpoint Recordings label, with the physical version following later during 2024.

Free, booking required

The Listening Group invites audiences to discover art that uses sound as its primary medium. The Listening Group will convene every four months with guest curators to be announced. Join our mailing list for details about future events.

Two new members appointed to Screen Ireland

Joseph Young

The Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin T.D. has announced the appointment of two new members to the Board of Fis Eireann (Screen Ireland).

The new appointees are: Roisin Henehan and Dr Ciaran O'Carroll. Commenting on the appointments, Minister Martin said "I want to thank Roisin and Ciaran for agreeing to join the Board of Screen Ireland. Their wide experience and skills will be hugely beneficial to Screen Ireland and its ongoing work over the coming years. I want to thank all the Board Members for giving their time and expertise in the development of the audiovisual sector."

These appointments were made following an open competition operated by the Public Appointments Service

A tree-inspired photography competition for children

With less than a month to go, Coillte is gearing up for National Tree Week, running from 3rd -10th March, as it launches a tree-inspired photography competition open to all primary school children

encouraging students to engage with nature and understand the importance of trees in safeguarding our planet for tomorrow. To enter, teachers and pupils are being asked to take a picture of their favourite tree or a favourite outdoor nature space and simply upload it to the Coillte website. Four winners will be selected, with each receiving an exciting trip for them and their class to 'Beyond the Trees Avondale' at Coillte's Avondale Forest Park in Rathdrum.

National Tree Week, organised 'Planting Trees for a Greener by The Tree Council of Ireland and Future' is what National Tree Week proudly supported by Coillte, is Ireland's largest annual tree celebra-tion. This year's theme, 'Planting this year. If you are thinking of get-Trees for a Greener Future', highlights the unique role trees and

climate change. This year will see Coillte once

again donate 150,000 tree saplings to local community groups for planting, to mark the annual celebration

Speaking at the launch of National Tree Week 2024, Cormac Downey, President of the Tree Council of Ireland said "National Tree Week is all about communities joining together and celebrating all the good things that trees and forests do for us. This year's theme, is all about and we hope everyone will get involved in a local event ting involved, we would encourage you to do so with simple activities

The competition is aimed at forests play in helping to address like hosting walks, discussions, or community planting. These important events we hope will encourage everyone to play their part in planting more trees for a greener future." Speaking about Coillte's role in

National Tree Week, ESG Director at Coillte, Sakinah Brennan, said, "National Tree Week is an important celebration as it highlights the significance of trees in helping to tackle climate change, promoting biodiversity and producing sustainably grown Irish wood, which is central to Coillte's strategic vision. This year we're particularly excited to launch our primary schools' competition which we hope will encourage students to explore the nature around them and to understand the importance of trees in safeguarding our future.



ARTS 17

Lady Capulet (Faye Keating), Juliet (Lucy Horner) and Nurse (Riona Coury)

Making Waves Youth Theatre present Romeo & Juliet

Whale Theatre, February 23rd-25th

Making Waves Youth Theatre is proud to present an exciting new production of William Shakespeare's classic tale of 'star crossed' lovers, Romeo and Juliet. The 36-strong talented cast is made up of Making Waves members ranging in age from 12 to 19.

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. This dynamic production will enthral audiences with its combination of romance, comedy, suspenseful drama and the sheer magic of Shakespeare's words.

Directed by Ciarán Coogan and adapted by Aideen Walton (both co-founders of MWYT), this production is simply unmissable!Suggested age guideline 10+

• The production will open with Scene 1 in the Meridian Square, Greystones at 7.30pm sharp for Friday & Saturday night performances (3.30pm sharp for Sunday performance). Audiences will then move to the Whale Theatre for Scene 2 and the rest of the play.

• The Whale Theatre will be open 30mins before the performance begins

• In the event of bad weather, ticket holders will receive an email with alternative instructions regarding the location of the opening scene.



Pictured at Coillte's Avondale Forest Park are Aedin Doyle and Mollie O'Neill, pupils from Our Ladu's Girld National School, Rathdrum, with Eanna Ni Lamhna, National Tree Council.

Times **18** PLANNING New fund to renovate heritage buildings

A new funding scheme under Southern Eastern and Midland Regional Programme is providing €120 million to support local authorities and their citizens to re-imagine town centres and to transform publicly owned vacant or derelict heritage buildings within those town centres through renovation, renewal, and adaptive reuse.



Pictured at the launch of THRIVE are - Back Row - David Kelly, Director, Southern Regional Assembly & Enda Hogan, Assistant Director, Southern Regional Assembly. Front Row - Michelle Breslin, Planning Advisor, Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, Minister Kieran O'Donnell TD, Minister of State for Local Government and Planning & Oonagh Messette, Southern Regional Assembly

THRIVE - the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme - was launched by Minister of State for Local Government and Planning Kieran O'Donnell TD. The scheme has been co-designed by the Southern Regional Assembly and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to address European, national and regional policy objectives. THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union and managed by the Southern Regional Assembly.

THRIVE will provide local authorities with funding of between Ä2m and Ä7m to renovate, refurbish and adapt vacant and derelict heritage buildings in their town centres. Heritage buildings under the scheme are classified as structures that form part of the architectural heritage and have unique architectural, historical, archaeological or artistic qualities, or are linked to the cultural and economic history of a place.

Projects are required to embrace the core values of the New European Bauhaus - sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion. The scheme promotes a citizen-centred community-led approach to planning, design and project selection under the Town Centre First framework. Grants of between \in 40,000 and \in 200,000 are available to support local authorities with the planning and design phase.

The first call is now open and published on the Southern Regional Assembly's web site at www.southernassembly.ie



Tuesday 20th February 2024

Elena Marini at the Smiley Pancake Day in the De la Salle Pastoral Centre Wicklow Town

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland calls for visionaries from Wicklow

Graduates of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland's (SEI) Ideas Academy went back to school last week to launch this year's call for people with an idea to solve a social or environmental problem, and the passion to make it happen, to apply for a place among Social Entrepreneurs Ireland's Ideas Academy Class of 2024.

creativity and imagination programme for ex-offendin the inspiring surroundings of Dublin's Merrion (provides cooking and Square, Ideas Academy nutritional education to graduates, Susan Adams, founder of Education for back behind their desks to Sustainability (climate literacy programme for enrolment for this year's school-children), Damien Ideas Academy is now Quinn, founder of An open!

Against a backdrop of Spéire Nua (rehabilitation ers), and Eilis Davenport children in schools) got spread the word that entrepreneurs comes as Social Entrepreneurs

Ireland this year cele-The scholars were put brates its 20th anniversary to the test by two dedicated to harnessing entrepreneurial bright the cumulative power of sparks, little Joshua Balfe (age 10) and Daisy Balfe people to enable lasting (Age 13) children of social change on the island of Ireland. Since its Susan Adams. The national call to create Ireland's foundation in 2004, next generation of social Social Entrepreneurs

Ireland has supported more than 600 social entrepreneurs across Ireland in areas such as mental health, homelessness, the environment, education, and unemployment, providing over €14 million in funding and pro-bono supports during that time. Previous alumni of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland include Wicklow based, Liz Gleeson, founder of Shapes of Grief, and Hugh Brennan. founder of An Cualann Cohousing Alliance. The Ideas Academvís

three-month programme is open to anyone wanting to make a real difference in our communities and create positive change for our nation, and is part of a €500,000 investment by Social Entrepreneurs Ireland in early-stage

social entrepreneurship this year. Applications are open until Tuesday March 12 2024, and registration is now open for people to attend an online information event featuring contributions from programme graduates on Tuesday February 20th full information at www.socialentrepreneurs. ie/theideasacademy

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL Marie Keogh seeks planning permission for: Two Storey Extension to Side of existing dwelling along with Conversion of Existing Attic Space at 32 Rock Manor Drive, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. A63 Y070. The planning application may be inspected or may be inspected o 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.

I. Karl Kohlmann, intend to apply for permission for apply for permission for development at this site: 48 Glenheron Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, A63 YP21. The development seeking permission will consist of the constructon of three rooflights in the main roof to rooflights in the main roof to the front of the property and all associated site works. The planning applicaton may be inspected or purchased 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 bours and a submission or hours and a submission or observaton in relaton to the applicaton 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.

W COUNTY COUNCIL

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

lan & Louise Stanley seek ission for the redesign permission for the redesign and reconfiguration of the existing entrance hall and roof to the existing entrance hall and the addition of a new master bedroom to the existing house together with any associated demolition, drainage and site works at drainage and site works at Annacrivey Woods, Kilmolin, Enniskerry, County Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased 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 or 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 C Elaine Nolan seeks planning permission for a conversion of attic space into a storage space with 1 window to front elevation and 3 windows to the rear elevation, with all associated site and ancillary works at 2 Waverly Hill, Greystones. 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 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 Architects, Planners & Builders Reach the widest readership for your planning notices in County Wicklow with Wicklow Times Call 01 286 9111 or email pauline@localtimes.ie

Wicklow workers invited to join Trade Union Week

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) last week announced Ireland's first Trade Union Week, which will take place between 29th April and 6th May 2024. ICTU said the week of coordinated events in workplaces and local communities in and across the island of Ireland will be 'the largest mobilisation of trade union members in decades', with an open invitation extended to all workers in Wicklow to take part.

Trade Union Week will mark the • Provide employment protection in culmination of ICTU's Better in a the workplace, and Trade Union campaign, which was launched this month to promote the tions values and benefits of trade union membership. The Better in a Trade Union campaign highlights benefits such as enhanced job security, advice and support, improved terms and conditions of employment, and better pay for Wicklow workers.

In a recent RED C omnibus poll, of trade unions. 44% of 18-34-year-olds in employ- "We know th ment stated they would be interested in joining a union. Their leading reasons for doing so were that trade unions

• Negotiate better pay and condi-

Speaking at the launch this week, ICTU General Secretary Owen Reidy said union members benefit from higher wages than nonunionised workers, and there is a growing awareness among young workers, in particular, of the benefits

"We know that everyone is better in a trade union, and thereis a cohort of younger workers, in particular, who recognise the need to have someone in their corner, fighting for

Launchign Trade Union Week were: Ciara Leddy, teacher, INTO; Andrew Keehan, Postal operative, communications workers union; Chris Crowley, clerical officer, civil service, Forsa; Adam Kavanagh, core netowrk technician, Communications Workers' Union; Isabella De Luca, admin officer, civil service, Forsa.

employment protections, better pay and working conditions," he said.

"They understand that these rights are only achieved through collective action, so Trade Union Week is our call to everyone in Wicklow to get involved.

"For young people, trade unions provide hope in helping them navigate the mounting socio-economic challenges for their generation such as the housing and climate crises. They also recognise the power of collective bargaining, and how it leads to better rates of pay.

"In our recent RED C poll, we asked people why they hadnit yet joined a trade union, and the most common response was ënobody ever asked me to.

"The Better in a Trade Union campaign, culminating in Trade Union Week, is our ask to everyone in Wicklow - come to a Trade Union Week event, speak to a union rep in your workplace, find out more on unions.ie. You will find a union that will fight for your rights to better pay, working conditions and job security."

Trade Union Week activities will take place in workplaces and local communities in Wicklow between Monday, 29th April and Friday, 3rd May, including information stalls and social events, activities in schools, colleges and universities, and public talks, table quizzes and film screenings. For more information, visit www.unions.ie.



Caroline Henry and Sarah Fitzpatrick at the Wicklow County Council Tourism Netowek & Workshop event at Beyond the Trees, Avondale.



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