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Tuesday 12th March 2024 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

POOR FARMERS SAY 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'

Wicklow farmers are reaching the end of their tether, according to Wicklow Irish Farmers Association (IFA) Chairman Tom Byrne. Making a presentation at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, Mr Byrne said farmers are no longer prepared to accept the "out of hand, ridiculous, nonsensical" regulations they are being forced to operate under.

Handing the Cathaoirleach a thick volume of the farming regulations, Mr Byrne said "this is what we have to farm under. I advise the Cathaoirleach to burn it; that's what we want to do, and we probably will."

There were many other farmers present at the meeting in the public gallery. Mr Byrne outlined some of the key issues affecting farmers, such as the redirecting of CAP funding to environmental schemes; the failure of the EU to properly

compensate farmers under CAP; overcomplicated and poorly implemented schemes from the Department of Agriculture; a "complete systems failure" on farm investment grant aid (TAMs Scheme); The nature restoration law, which places further restrictions on farmers; The lack of flexibility being shown to tillage farmers struggling to meet the stipulated 'three-crop rule' due to a very difficult autumn; Unfair measuring of agriculture

emissions, and much more.

"Over the past number of weeks, farmers across mainland Europe have been voicing their anger and frustration at the ever-increasing administrative burden being placed on farmers, which have had a major impact on farm family incomes," explained Mr Byrne. "These frustrations have broadened into anger with European and national lawmakers over the massive increase in regulation relating to agri-



Azra Yoldas as the Mad Hatter, Meabh Redden as the Queen of Hearts and Sophie Breslin as The Hare, celebrating World Book Day at St. Mary's & St. Gerard's National School, Enniskerry.

Pic: Michael Kelly

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culture. The EU, the Irish Government, and Local Government, are devising policies far from the farm gate, with little or no consideration of the direct impact on farmers."

A meeting between the IFA President Francie Gorman and the Minister for Agriculture, following the nationwide farmers' protests in February, resulted in an agreement to make an interim payment to all farmers under The ACRES Scheme. "However, it will only partly resolve the payment mess created by his own department," said Mr Byrne. "In addition, there are farmers still waiting to get into the scheme."

As well as being critical of the European Commission and Irish Government, Mr Byrne also outlined a number of Local Government issues.

He said "Delays in the planning process are hindering on-farm investment; The implementation of the zoned land tax, a completely unfair tax, has placed a penal charge on farmers with land on the outskirts of towns and villages; County Councils will be doing an increasing number of inspections on farms. There needs to be a clear protocol in place regarding how these inspections are conducted. There are huge issues with ash die-back on rural roads. Each County Council needs to come up with a strategy and funding to remove these trees."

Mr Byrne also noted "The lack of dog wardens to deal with the

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LAURIE KEARON

LOCAL ELECTION CANDIDATE

FINE GAEL

I will be representing Fine Gael as a new candidate in the South Wicklow Electoral area including Rathdrum, Arklow, Aughrim, Avoca and surrounding areas.

As a candidate standing for election for the first time, I am committed to representing South Wicklow's diverse community, focusing on enhancing standards for all our citizens, including our senior and younger citizens and those who are disadvantaged in order to foster a thriving community for all.

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Rachel Quinn and Olivia Jackson celebrating World Book Day at St Mary's & St. Gerard's National School, Enniskerry.

Meeting on Wicklow Town traffic situation

Wicklow Town & District Chamber of Commerce will hold an open business meeting this week on Monday 11th March, at 6:15pm upstairs in O'Shea's Corner. This meeting is to engage with local business owners and follow on from the previous open meeting held in September 2023.

An update will be given on the traffic/parking situation and the meeting held between Council members/staff on 7th February.

"This is an opportunity to engage with other businesses and to have your say on any issues or ideas you may have," said Wicklow Chamber President Stephen Delaney. "It would be very welcomed if you could attend".

Sugarloaf Lions Club table quiz

Sugarloaf Lions Club will host a table quiz on Thursday 14th March at 8.00pm in Greystones Rugby Club. This is always a fun evening. All funds raised will go towards activities at Open Door.

Soup & Sandwiches

The next Soup and Sandwich lunch in Greystones will be held in St.Patrick's Swann Hall on Tuesday, 19th March from 12.30 until 2.00. Everyone welcome. Continue the St.Patrick's Day festivities by joining with your friends over homemade soup and lots of chat. Suggested donation of €7 for local charities.

The Old Dublin Society

Dermot O'Riordan will present Dublin 'On War Service' Lapel Badges during WWI, at 6pm on Wednesday March 13th in the Conference Room, Dublin City Library & Archive, 139-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2. All are welcome - admission is free and no booking is required.

Greystones University of the Third Age

Greystones University of the Third Age has organised a talk on 14th March 2024 about The Warm Heart of Africa, in Delgany Golf Club, 10.30 am. The talk will be given by Mary Donohoe, a trained nurse who founded a humanitarian organisation, The Rose Project. The group focuses on the provision of healthcare to those living with HIV in East Africa, especially Malawi.

The Rose Project has funded 5 new health care facilities. This includes the maternity hospital in Lilongwe, capital of Malawi. As well as providing health care to an excess of 1,000,000 people. Mary is currently funding a child care programme in Lilongwe. In 2010, she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. There is a small charge of €5 to cover the cost of the venue. For full details of Greystones University of the Third Age, see u3agreystones.com.

Film at Whale Theatre

Greystones Film Club will be screening the film Smoke Sauna Sisterhood on 14th March at Whale Theatre, 8pm. Doors open 7pm. Admission €12. This is an award-winning documentary about Estonia's smoke sauna tradition. Women from the Voro community share the sauna and their intimate stories and secrets. The result is a journey of cleansing, healing and solidarity. And, yes, there's still free popcorn. You can book tickets at ticketsolve.com.

Meeting for Bereaved Parents

The monthly Anam Care meeting for bereaved parents will be held on Monday, 18th March in the Parkview Hotel Newtownmountkennedy, 7:30pm to 9pm. Anam Cara supports all bereaved parents, regardless of the age of their child or the circumstances of their death.

This informal and gentle evening gives an opportunity to meet with other parents. Meeting is in a safe and comfortable place with people who understand the milestones and challenges of grief and loss. The evening is free and open to all bereaved parents. Full details from 085 2888 888, info@AnamCara.ie.

Wicklow PPN invites you to join the Climate & Environment Discussion

Did you know that Wicklow County Council has added new members and roles to the environment team for the county and has recently launched the new Wicklow Climate Action Plan?

Wicklow PPN is inviting people to join them in meeting the climate and environment team, hear about their plans and contribute to the discussion on climate and environmental protection in our communities. The meeting will be of interest to anyone who would like to share their concerns and ideas about the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, and all are welcome.

The meeting will take place on Saturday 23rd March 2024 from 10.30am in An Tairseach Organic Farm and Ecology Centre. The meeting will end with a walk on the farm and a light lunch where

conversations and networking can continue in the beautiful and relaxed atmosphere that this venue provides.

A spokesperson for Wicklow PPN said "From the consultations we have run around various plans and policies, we recognise that there is huge concern about our environment and the effects of climate change. As it is part of our role to connect communities with the local authority, we are delighted to be able to collaborate with Wicklow County Council to facilitate these important discussions."

A spokesperson for the WCC environment team said

"Community engagement was the foundation in developing the Wicklow Climate Action Plan and we were delighted with the levels of participation we received. It is important to us to keep these lines of communication open as we all need to work together to protect Wicklow's rich heritage and environment."

To book a place at the event Email info@countywicklowppn.ie or call/text 086 048 7434. More information about how the PPN connects communities with the local authority can be found on the PPN Facebook Page and its website: www.countywicklowppn.ie

'Foster-Girl' author to give talk in Arklow

Extracts from *Hidden World of a Foster-Girl* will be read by local teacher Jacinta Hayes

Gorey resident Sadie Harpur has published her first book *The Hidden World of a Foster-Girl* and on April 2nd she will deliver a talk about her experience to Arklow Library at 7pm. Admission to the event is free but advance booking is advised.

Harpur will be joined by Jackie Hayden who co-authored her book and previously topped the book charts with two editions of *My Boy* about the late rock star Philip Lynott. Extracts from Harpur's book will be read Jacinta Hayes, a teacher residing in Arklow whose reading at the recent launch of the book in Gorey Library attracted much praise.

Sadie Harpur's book details how one Irish woman survived the Irish Foster Care system before becoming an inspiration for others who suffered as she did. Born and raised in Dublin, Sadie went through turbulent periods of high anxiety. Suffering from learning difficulties resulting from undiagnosed dyslexia, she was described as mentally below average, and suffered bouts of depression, suicidal thoughts and was repeatedly bullied. She endured serious teenage problems, including self-harming, violent outbursts, zero self-esteem, and the eventual suicide of her foster-brother Gary.

As Sadie says, "Writing *The Hidden World of a Foster-Girl* was hugely therapeutic. It helped me look deep into my past and unlock thoughts and experiences I had hidden away in dark places. But with

the help of my loving family and great friends, my story is out there, so I hope others might take comfort from the fact that I survived."

Because of her dyslexia she was assisted in writing her book by

Jackie Hayden. As Hayden says, "Sadie's story is an inspirational tale of one woman facing all that life threw at her, and winning in the end through sheer guts, determination, honesty and love."

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Moylisha Hill lithium licence matter referred to Department

Coillte has referred the matter of lithium prospecting in the Moylisha Hill area of South West Wicklow to the Department of Environment.

Councillors in West Wicklow recently agreed to send a letter of objection to the Board of Management of Coillte to express their unanimous opposition to the continued prospecting for Lithium at Moylisha Hill and calling for Coillte to deny access to their land holdings for that purpose.

Coillte has informed *Wicklow Times* that it has not issued any licence and has now referred the matter to the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), which is responsible for prospecting licences. Blackstairs Lithium Limited (BLL) plan to carry out a drilling programme at Moylisha Hill which 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.

The letter of opposition from Baltinglass Municipal District councillors was proposed by Fianna Fail councillor John Mullen, who said he's opposed to the potential environmental damage of a lithium mine in the area. Sinn Fein TD John Brady also called for the Department of the Environment to rescind the granting of a drilling licence. The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications says that a surface and groundwater risk assessment was carried out on the drilling area by external environ-

mental consultants and they found the risk to be low.

Anthony McNulty, founding chairperson of the Protect Moylisha Hill group, said "this prospecting is close to the Wicklow Way walking trail, on top of and through a locally important aquifer and the monument of Leaba na Saidhe also known as the Moylisha wedge tomb."

Mr McNulty, who is running in the local elections for People Before Profit, added "The community was and is here first and must be valued first above all [...] This is the Garden of Ireland, we cannot allow a mine to ruin its reputation or our countryside [...] We have to fight and reclaim the common sense approach to how we treat our people, our environment and respect those who are custodians of it before it's too late."



Sinead O'Keefe and Abigail Harrison celebrating World Book Day in St. Mary's & St. Gerard's National School, Emiskerry.

POOR FARMERS SAY 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'

Continued from page 1

dog attacks on sheep flocks; The implementation of commercial rates by some County Councils on farm buildings, despite these being specifically exempt; The proposed increase in water charges will place an unfair burden on farmers and in particular, those with fragmented holdings. We are asking Wicklow County Council to seek a fundamental reset of how farm policy is devised, implemented in the EU

and in Ireland."

Mr Byrne concluded: "We want to work with the elected representatives and the people employed by Wicklow County Council. We're not anti this and anti that. We know we have an environmental and climate problem. We accept that. Farmers were probably the first people to recognise that we had a change in our climate. We knew we had such mild winters. And it affects us every day we get up.

"It has rained now more or less

constantly since about the 27th day of June. The harvest was basically lost. We haven't been able to plant in the fall. We haven't now managed to plough our fields to get them ready for the next crops. That includes grass. It includes everything right across the gamut. We know we're in trouble, we know we have a climate crisis, and we don't deny it. But we want to work together. We don't want it to be 'them and us'. And clearly, we're saying enough is enough."

Cllr Shay Cullen said "I want to thank the members of IFA for coming here in great numbers, and showing the passion for protecting their livelihoods. We know we have a world shortage of food, and if we continue with the policies that we're putting forward, we're going to have a major catastrophe on our hands in the coming years. Unfortunately, all I see in agriculture is more and more bureaucracy, overcomplicated schemes designed to reduce farming, to reduce the amount of food we pro-

duce, to reduce farmers' livelihoods. The Department of Agriculture clearly get pleasure out of penalising farmers, and that shouldn't be the way. There needs to be a change, and a strong change of attitude."

Cllr John Mullen proposed a resolution, which was agreed to by the rest of the councillors. It proposed that "Wicklow County Council recognises the significant contribution that farming and the agri-sector makes to the Irish and local economy; the Council acknowledges the

income challenge on Irish farmers arising from the significant increases in the cost of doing business, regulatory costs and cuts in basic import or income support for farmers; the Council calls on the Government to introduce no further regulations on farmers or any measures that may increase costs on farms without full negotiation and agreement with the Irish Farmers Association. This Council calls on the European Union and the Irish Government to provide additional stand-alone funding, separate to the common agricultural policy, to support farmers and to undertake climate and biodiversity measures."

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Wicklow takes biodiversity lead

Four Wicklow communities are receiving support to take action to protect and promote local plants and wildlife, thanks to an important partnership between Community Foundation Ireland and Government.

Local groups are to work with ecology experts to increase awareness, develop local biodiversity action plans specific to their area and to implement those plans.

A wide range of activity will take place. Each is supported through private philanthropy made possible by donors to Community Foundation Ireland work in co-operation with public funding from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The four Wicklow projects are:

- Newcastle Residents Association to undertake an education programme with walks, talks and new information boards.
- Enniskerry Tidy Towns are to use Art and Nature to grow an existing programme of information walks.
- Bird and bat boxes are to be put in place in Bray as the local biodiversity group and tidy towns work to implement an existing biodiversity action plan.
- Tinahely Community Projects is beginning work on its local biodiversity action plan to identify future actions to protect plants and wildlife.

In total over €14,000 is being made available to support the work across Wicklow.

Announcing the grants, Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD, said: "These grants are unique-

ly impactful because they connect community groups with scientific expertise, helping them to better understand their local biodiversity. Successful grantees work with ecologists to create a Community Biodiversity Action Plan and can then seek funding to implement it. All of the data they collect is shared with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, making a valuable contribution to citizen science in Ireland.

"This partnership between the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Community Foundation Ireland began as a 'Seed for Nature' at the 2019 National Biodiversity Conference, so it's particularly special to see it flourish and deliver so much impact."

Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of Community Foundation Ireland added "This is a pioneering partnership between Government and philanthropy which has provided leadership in responding to the biodiversity emergency. While the challenge is great, what is hugely encouraging is the interest, energy, and enthusiasm of the full spectrum of Wicklow groups answering the call and taking action to protect our plants and wildlife. On behalf of our private donors, I wish each group every success in their continued efforts."

Niall O'Donnchu, Director General of the National Parks and

Wildlife Service added: "NPWS is delighted to partner with Community Foundation Ireland on the Biodiversity Fund and to support the work of community groups in restoring and protecting nature in their local area. Science and expertise can guide us but must be translated into action by and with local communities."

Green TD Steven Matthews said, "I am delighted to see some extra funding going to Wicklow community groups for their work to protect and restore nature.

"One of my priorities is to protect and restore our natural environment. The challenge we face to reverse the serious decline in water quality, the loss of habitats for wildlife and critical loss of many species and insects needs action at all levels. Our governments in the past have ignored our biodiversity crisis but we are committed to increasing funding and support to those who understand and want to protect nature.

"Organisations with grants can create a community biodiversity action plan and seek funding to implement it. They can then share their data with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, making a valuable contribution to citizen science. We are lucky to have so many fantastic environmental groups and community volunteers in Wicklow



Launching biodiversity support for Wicklow, Community Foundation Ireland Chief Executive, Denise Charlton, Minister Malcolm Noonan TD with Dr Deirdre Lynn and Andy Bleasdale of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

who are also committed to protecting nature. I am happy to meet or assist any groups who want to get involved in environmental protection action."

Also welcoming the funding, Minister Simon Harris said: "I am particularly pleased to see groups in Wicklow receive this funding, who are among 78 new community projects being supported nationwide.

"Their commitment to protect and enhance our local biodiversity is key in protecting the health of the environment in Wicklow.

"People in Wicklow are particularly attached to the biodiversity and thriving nature that surrounds us so it's great to see the Government put funding to support local groups in the county.

"Everything must be done to support projects that aim to protect

our land that make for the most beautiful County in the country.

"Each local project will be receiving access to experts to either develop a new Community Biodiversity Action Plan (CBAP) or support to implement measures from an existing plan. The grants are the latest in a joint Biodiversity Fund, an initiative of the Community Foundation Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service which has seen 213 such action plans developed across the country through a joint investment of €1.76 Million since 2019. This will directly support the vital work of enhancing biodiversity across Wicklow. These projects are uniquely impactful because they connect community groups with scientific expertise, helping them to better understand their

local biodiversity.

"The preservation and enhancement of our local biodiversity is crucial to the health of our environment. These Community Biodiversity Grants not only foster a deeper connection between our communities in and their natural surroundings but also ensure that local actions here in Wicklow contribute significantly to national biodiversity objectives.

"This investment just shows Government's commitment to biodiversity and the pivotal role community groups play in conservation efforts."

Minister Harris concluded: "I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes of these projects for Wicklow and the continued partnership between community groups and ecologists."



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Wicklow Climate Heroes wanted

Community groups all over Co. Wicklow are being invited to take part in the second nationwide climate competition for community groups, 'Climate Heroes'.

Funded by Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs and organised by environmental NGO Global Action Plan, the 'Climate Heroes' competition will see local groups across the country try to minimise their carbon footprints. The team-based climate competition will begin on 15 April and last for two weeks.

"We are inviting local community groups to take part in the Climate Heroes challenge. Everyone taking part will try to carry out as many climate-positive activities as they can, and our online app will translate the activities logged by participants into CO2 emissions saved. The team that has saved the greatest amount of greenhouse gas emissions are the winners of this exciting competition," said Hans Zomer, CEO of Global Action Plan, the organisation organising the challenge.

The Climate Heroes Challenge provides a unique combination of encouragement, education and real life climate impact, offering participants a menu of 40 climate smart activities, based on the four main areas of individual greenhouse gas emissions:



Finagl County Council Climate Heroes, Community Climate Challenge, 2023 Climate Heroes winners. Pic: Paul Sherwood

Transport, Food, Consumption and Energy.

Using aggregated climate data and Life Cycle Assessment analysis per activity, the challenge provides a gamified, research-based platform that aims to engage people and create awareness about the big difference that small actions can achieve. The Challenge will be supported by workshops that build participants' competencies for global citizenship.

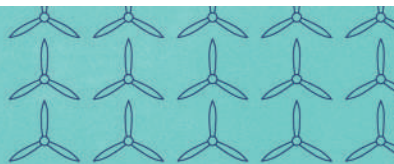
"The Climate Heroes challenge is a friendly competition, but it is also a serious tool for climate education. It's a powerful

way to explore how people can respond to climate change, as consumers and active global citizens. Participants will discover practical ways to reduce their CO2 emissions and make climate action part of their everyday lives," said Alex Whyatt, who coordinates the Global Citizenship programme at Global Action Plan.

"In our workshops, we see that people are often overwhelmed by the interlinked dimensions of sustainability - for example, when something makes environmental sense, but is financially unsustainable.

The Climate Heroes competition supports small actions that can have a positive benefit, and opens a discussion about bigger actions we can take to help build safer, healthier and more sustainable communities," continued Whyatt.

"Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time and if we are to address it effectively we will need to make changes at all levels of society. It's not an either-or situation. Climate Heroes encourages everyone to step up, get together, and work together," Whyatt concluded.



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Grand Marshals for this year's Greystones St. Patrick's Day Parade, Siofra Lawless and Pierce Cahill

Greystones parade to celebrate inclusivity, community and fun

The annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Greystones organised by the Greystones Town Team and the Greystones Municipal District is set to dazzle and delight attendees of all ages, with a vibrant procession showcasing the very best of our community spirit and cultural heritage.

This year's parade promises to be bigger and better than ever before with the theme for 2024 being Creative Carnival, featuring an array of exciting attractions and entertainment for everyone to enjoy.

Scheduled to kick off on the 17th March at 11:00 AM from the South Beach carpark, the parade will wind its way through

the heart of Greystones, culminating in the lively Marina Plaza. As always, the event aims to celebrate the spirit of St. Patrick's Day while fostering inclusivity and participation from all members of the community.

One of the stand-out features of this year's parade is the introduction of a 'Quiet Zone', designed to ensure that

individuals with sensory sensitivities can fully enjoy the festivities in a comfortable and welcoming environment. This initiative reflects our commitment to making the event accessible to everyone, regardless of their unique needs. The Quiet Zone is a section of the parade (from the south beach zebra crossing to Lam's takeaway) where we invite floats, musicians, participants to reduce their normal volume. The Parade commit-

tee has been working with Adam Harris and AsIAM to introduce the Quiet Zone this year.

Attendees can look forward to a diverse line-up of participants, including local sports clubs, dance schools, and marching bands, all adding to the lively atmosphere with their energetic performances.

Additionally, the parade will feature pop-up busking musicians, adding an extra layer of excitement and spontaneity to the proceedings.

For the younger attendees, there will be free face painting available, allowing children to unleash their creativity

and embrace the festive spirit. Plus, participants are encouraged to get creative and design their own parade floats, with a special prize awaiting the creators of the best float. The theme of the 2024 parade is Creative Carnival, so attendees are urged to get creative!

The Parade committee is excited to announce the 2024 Parade Grand Marshals - Siofra Lawless (World Champion Boxer) and Pierce Cahill (Lakers). The grand marshals will participate in the parade and will be sitting in a special vintage car.

But the excitement doesn't end there! Local

shops and businesses are invited to join in the fun by decorating their storefronts in vibrant St. Patrick's Day themes. A prize will be awarded to the establishment with the most eye-catching window display, encouraging friendly competition and community engagement.

To stay updated on all the latest news and announcements regarding the 2024 Greystones St. Patrick's Day Parade, be sure to follow us on social media. Connect with us on Instagram and Facebook by following @greystones.ie, where you'll find behind-the-scenes sneak peeks, event highlights, and more.

2024 Greystones Municipal District

People of the Year Awards



The Awards will be presented in the Greystones Golf Club, Greystones on Thursday 25th April, 2024 at 8pm

Application forms and tickets are available from Greystones Municipal District, Tel: 01 2876694 or Email: Kcoughla@wicklowcoco.ie / greystonesmd@wicklowcoco.ie
Ticket Price €35
www.wicklow.ie

Closing date for receipt of nominations is Thursday 28th March 2024

- Sportsperson of the Year
- Civic Award
- Special Person of the Year
- Cultural Person of the Year
- Commercial Award
- Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Greystones picks its Perfect Pooch

Given that just about every home in Greystones has a dog, the annual search for the perfect pooch has long proven to be a very popular one.

There can only be one winner though, and this year, it was the shaggy-haired Fiadh and the equally shaggy-haired Elizabeth who got the most votes.

With part of the winner's prize being a grooming session with V.I.Pets on Theatre Lane, owner Fernanda handed the happy, loving couple their framed certificate. And that free groom.

"Greystones is a town that seems to be about fifty percent dogs and fifty percent coffee," laughs Fernanda, "so, we're very proud to be associated with this annu-



Winners Elizabeth & Fiadh Get Their Framed Cert.

al search. It's an almost impossible task picking the very best dog, given

that every dog we meet is wonderful..." For 2024, there were

over 100 entries to the Greystones Guide's long-running Me & My Pooch competition, which is sponsored by local eco heating suppliers Glenergy. For founder Jonathan Leonard, being part of the competition each year "is a bit of fun, and it reminds people just how wonderful dogs are..."

The organisers stated that there are currently no plans to run an annual search for Greystones' finest feline, given that each and every cat believes that they are the greatest creature to ever walk God's green earth.



Fiadh Homan Murphy and Emily Mae Homan are pictured at the Freezebuary swim at Greystones Harbour, in aid of Lee McGuirk. Throughout the month of February, friends of Lee did a daily swim in freezing cold water, adding a minute to their time in the water each day. Just before Christmas, 21 year old Lee McGuirk received a devastating stage 4 cancer diagnosis of Sarcoma, a bone and muscle cancer, and was told by doctors that he had just a few years to live. You can donate to the fundraising campaign, 'Lee's retirement fund' (gofundme.com/lees-retirement-fund) to contribute towards helping Lee complete his bucket list.



GREYSTONES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT in association with



Greystones Community College to be 'first school' to progress in bundle

Minister Simon Harris has welcomed positive progress regarding Greystones Community College after months of campaigning. The school will be the first project to break ground in its bundle, further highlighting the importance of this going to construction as soon as possible.

"However, there is still plenty of work to be completed and I will not rest until boots are on the ground," Minister Harris said.

He added: "I have been persistently pushing the Department and Minister for Education on this, and this week I have again spoken with the Minister personally to drive home the need for progress.

"Families have raised a number of questions over the past few weeks and some of these have been answered by the Department of Education. The Department has committed that Greystones Community College will absolutely be the first project among its bundle to break ground.

"Further to this, the Department wants to reassure all parents that it will ensure that school places will be available for all children for September 2024 and in to the future. This is essential, we cannot be satisfied with simply resolving the shortages expected this September. We must have a long term solution to school shortages in the area.

"The Department of Education has indicated their next update on the 15th of March, and will be sure to immediately update families once received. I will not rest until the shortages of school places is resolved."

In the meantime Cllr Derek Mitchell has suggested that two buildings lying to Shoreline Leisure Centre could be used to alleviate the problems of the shortage of secondary school places in



Minister Simon Harris

Greystones for September 2024.

Cllr Mitchell said these empty buildings could be used for classes until the Community College is built. One is owned by Cairn and the other by the County Council which has bought it for use as an Enterprise Centre.

"I am urging the Department of Education to rent some space there and sort out parents worries' said Cllr Derek Mitchell. "The land for the new school was zoned 15 years ago by Councillors and the Department should have made much faster progress in building it," concluded Cllr Mitchell.

The issue of the chronic shortage of school places in the Greystones District is coming to a

boiling point, with a recent meeting on the matter attracting a large crowd of concerned, frustrated and annoyed parents and public representatives.

John Brady TD is requesting Minister for Education Norma Foley to meet with Wicklow's TDs to discuss the issue. There are currently three schools in the Greystones Municipal District which are waiting for essential progress on school building programmes. Temple Carrig and Colaiste Chraobh Abhann are both waiting for their long-planned extensions to be progressed, while Greystones Community College needs a permanent building in Charlesland. Deputy Brady has called for the Government to cut through the 'red tape' holding up progress.

Last week, Jennifer Whitmore TD raised the plight of those secondary school students still without a place in the Greystones District with the Tanaiste in the Dail. This was raised during Questions on Promised Legislation.

Deputy Whitmore said, "In the Dail today, I took the opportunity to highlight the 20-30 students from Greystones who are still without a school place for September 2024. Despite a commitment last month from the Department of Education that parents would be informed of where their children would be allocated a place within a matter of weeks, there is still no formal update from them. At the time, the Department



Cllr Derek Mitchell and Fine Gael candidate Louise Felon Gaskin looking at the empty buildings

said sufficient accommodation was present within the current schools in the area, so I'm not sure where the hold-up is. An allocation must be done as soon as possible to prevent any further anxiety for both children and parents.

"I acknowledge and welcome Greystones Community College's decision to make 50 additional places available. However, this was only the first tranche of places, and 20-30 children still haven't been allocated a place.

"These children are the last students in the town to know where they will attend secondary in September. This is incredibly stressful for them, particularly when hundreds of their peers are excited about their transition to secondary and the new chapter opening to them."

Deputy Whitmore went on to say, "In his response, the Tanaiste recognised how stressful this would be for those children, and he committed to raising it with the Minister. Hopefully, this will help hurry the decision up and finally answer the question for those parents and children."



Jennifer Whitmore TD raised the matter with the Tanaiste last week

SciFest success for ETSS

Green TD Steven Matthews has praised Educate Together Secondary School (ETSS) Wicklow for their hosting of SciFest. This was a schoolwide science competition that encouraged students to ask questions, research a topic that interested them and present on the day to a judging panel.

Deputy Matthews was one of the judges and passed on particular congratulations to the overall winners - Urte Matuseviciute and Odhran O'Reilly from 2nd Year.

Discussing the tournament, Deputy Matthews said: "I had the privilege to judge thirteen outstanding projects from students in ETSS Wicklow. Whenever I get the chance to visit schools, it never ceases to amaze me the level of enthusiasm, intelligence, and drive that so many of our young people have and it definitely offers huge hope for the future.

"I want to offer particular praise to the winners - Urte & Odhran on their project which researched the impact of plastic bottles on the pH of water. I know that they are very keen to work further on this project and expand their research based on their initial findings.

"The enthusiastic, inquisitive and professional way the students carried out their work and then presented to the judges was outstanding. They showed that scientific research can be fun, challenging, surprising and a good way to improve teamwork.

"I have no doubt that these students have a very bright future. It is clear that this school, under principal John Maddock and teachers like Saoirse Rawson are providing great opportunities to stimulate an interest in STEM amongst their students."

"I am continuing my work to help provide a new school building for ETSS Wicklow so that they can offer the full range of curriculum and facilities. I have been in touch the Minister for Education to push their need for a new school as soon as possible," concluded Deputy Matthews.



Deputy Steven Matthews with Urte Matuseviciute and Odhran O'Reilly



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY AWARDS SCHEME 2024

As part of its commitment to supporting local community development, Wicklow County Council operates an annual Community Award Scheme. The fund for 2024 will be available as grant aid to successful community groups and local organisations wishing to undertake community projects in their area.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

- Maximum grant amount of €500 per organisation for small projects and group running costs.
- Please note only one application per organisation will be considered.

The application form is available on Wicklow County Council's website at www.wicklow.ie.

Any queries should be made to the Social Development Directorate (Housing & Community), Wicklow County Council, Whitegates, Wicklow Town, A67 FW96.

Email: CAS@wicklowcoco.ie

Phone: 0404 20208

The closing date for receipt of applications is 4.00p.m. on Friday 26th April 2024. Late applications will not be considered.



Grant payments for students left behind by school transport scheme

The process is now open to apply for the back payment for the exceptional payment grant for children with a school bus ticket but for whom a school bus did not run.

The exceptional payment was introduced in response to the shortage of school buses, and was intended to cover additional costs faced by parents in providing transport to school for their children.

Deputy Jennifer Whitmore has repeatedly asked the Minister to ensure the timely payment of the exceptional payment, and not to force parents to wait until the end of the school year as was initially required by the Department.

Deputy Whitmore said: "I welcome the fact that the Minister has finally decided to enable the payment of this interim grant for those parents whose school transport was delayed coming into operation at the start of the term.

"This payment was brought in to assist families who have paid for their child to access the school transport scheme but found at the last minute there was no bus running. Whilst most routes are now opera-

tional, following the initial delay, there are still far too many families in this situation, and their parents have to get them to school. I have met parents using their work lunch breaks, annual leave and even, in extreme situations, giving up employment because they cannot get their child to school and hold down their job. They applied and successfully obtained a transport ticket for the school year, yet here they are in March, still without a service.

"The Department of Education will write to the affected families and I would encourage every parent who received that letter to apply. The payment is made on a term-by-term basis, which means that you can claim the grant for every day your child attended school but for which there was no school bus available.

"When this payment was first announced, we were told it would be paid retrospectively at the end



Jennifer Whitmore TD

apply for refunds if they have had to get their children to school because their bus was not available.

"This payment will be calculated from the date the service ceased to the date that a service is provided to these children. Therefore, if your child was without a bus service for ten days, or even ten weeks, or is still without one now, you can claim this grant. This grant is only open to school transport ticket holders, and it is for a number of days that these children attended school from the date the service ceased or should have run.

"The School Transport Section will process payment for this grant for the number of days they have travelled to school. Families should request that their school submit the statement of attendance form to the School Transport Section, and the Department will process these grant payments."

BIFE soccer team wins the CUFAI Invitational Cup

They came, they saw and they conquered. Bray Institute of Further Education's Soccer team was crowned champions of the All Ireland CUFAI Invitational Cup in Athlone Stadium on Thursday last.

BIFE beat IADT Dun Laoghaire 2-1 in a nail-biting football match. The contest looked like it was going into extra before BIFE's number 10 and man-of-the-match Fallou Niang put the ball into the back of the net with 5 minutes to go.

The Principal Ray Tedders congratulated the football team and their coach Emeka Onwubiko: "The spirit of the team is emblematic of the spirit of BIFE. Our soccer team, which is part of our overall soccer course, run in association with Liverpool FC, is going from strength to strength and has brought soccer students to the college form far and wide".



BIFE players celebrate with coach Emeka Onwubiko



Annabel O'Reilly and Michaela Thornley as the Mario bros, celebrating World Book Day in St. Mary's & St. Gerard's National School, Enniskerry.

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'International Women's Day should mark watershed for women's safety'

'Our community belongs to us all'

Labour Party Councillor in Bray, Anne Ferris, is launching a local campaign calling on Wicklow County Council to adopt a 'Safe Place for Women Charter' to ensure that Bray and other towns in County Wicklow are made safe, accessible, and pleasant for all women.

Cllr. Ferris has called on women in the Bray area to get in touch with her to highlight safety risks in their area with suggestions for making the community a Safe Place for Women.

Cllr. Ferris says that Bray is a wonderful area, with a strong community. "We all believe that

everyone - whatever their gender, age, or walk of life - has the right to feel safe and enjoy all that the wonderful amenities that our town has to offer. Unfortunately, there remain many ways in our physical environment that can make women feel less safe. We are all familiar with the

routes which we avoid at night, the lonelier parts of our commutes, and the ways in which contribute to making our world feel smaller.

"This year's International Women's Day should mark a watershed moment in promoting women's enjoyment of their own communities.

Wicklow County Council can do much more to use its resources, and the knowledge that exists among the people who live here, to make Bray a safer place for women. No one knows better how to make this community thrive than the people who live here. That is why I am inviting people

who live in Bray to get in touch with me with their ideas for making the town safer and more accessible. You can email me at anneferris7@gmail.com.

"I want to start the change to see Bray become a safer place for women and indeed all its residents. Local Authorities in other countries have already introduced charters like this. My Labour Party colleagues and I are engaging with our European counterparts to learn what worked for

them and what can be improved on.

"Safety in the area means freedom for all those who live in it. We all stand to benefit by implementing this charter. I will be collating all the responses I receive and will be introducing a charter, comprising those measures and international best practice, to ensure that we can make every neighbourhood a place where all women can walk, run, shop, commute, grow, and thrive," concluded Cllr. Ferris.



Cllr Anne Ferris



Cllr Lourda Scott at a Councillors Caucus event in Bray for International Women's Day 2022

Scott concludes her term as Chair of first Wicklow Women's Councillors Caucus

Greystones Green Party councillor Lourda Scott has concluded her term as the Chair of the first Wicklow Women's Councillors Caucus, a cross party grouping aimed at facilitating collaboration among women councillors and addressing the unique challenges they face.

Throughout the last three years, the caucus has focused on practical initiatives to empower women to stay engaged in politics and consider running for local elections. Training programmes and networking events were implemented to enhance the skills of women in political roles and increase the visibility of female Councillors.

Cllr Scott said "One of the reasons that spurred me into running for election was that I didn't see enough women either in local or national government. Since being elected in 2019 I see first hand how important it is to have a diversity of voices present, and heard, in deci-

sion making spaces. In Wicklow County Council we currently only have 11 female councillors out of 32. In the Greystones District where I represent, I am the only female councillor. The need for better representation spurred me into setting up the Women's Councillors Caucus. One of the things I most enjoyed about this is that we were able to put aside party politics and work together for a common goal. We had very positive tailored training sessions and a number of networking events. Most recently we hosted members of the Bray and Wicklow Traveller community in the Council. I do hope that we will see more women from all back-

grounds running in this year Local Elections the future. It is well known that the more diversity at the table, the better decisions are made, and that everyone living in our County."

Cllr Scott is optimistic about the caucus's sustainability into the future and emphasized the importance of building on the progress achieved. "The Wicklow Women's Councillors Caucus is firmly embedded into the Council structure and I trust it will continue to serve its purpose for the women who are elected in June. Let's keep working towards a future where women are equally represented in local government," Cllr Scott concluded.

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First Responder groups honoured at Bray reception

The work and commitment of the First Responder Groups across Bray Municipal District were honoured at a reception hosted by Bray Municipal District recently.



Lorraine Gallagher (District Manager, Bray) and Cllr Melanie Corrigan (Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District) making a presentation to Kilmacanogue Community First Responders



Lorraine Gallagher (District Manager, Bray) and Cllr Melanie Corrigan (Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District) making a presentation to Enniskerry Community First Responders

Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District, Cllr Melanie Corrigan, thanked the first responder groups - Bray Community First Responder Group, Enniskerry Community First Responder Group and Kilmacanogue Community First Responder

Group - for their "unfailing commitment in putting people first and acknowledged the impact of first responders on many people lives". Cllr Corrigan said that Cathaoirleach receptions play an important role in enabling the Municipal District to recognise and honour the role of volunteers in working to make

our communities a better place to live.

"In my capacity as Cathaoirleach I wish to congratulate and thank you all for your voluntary and often unseen work, responding to all manner of situations for those that need it most in a professional and dignified manner," Cllr Corrigan stated while also paying tribute

to the families of the First Responder volunteers who sacrifice to support volunteers.

District Manager, Lorraine Gallagher, thanked the three first responder groups for their commitment and often unseen work stating: "Supporting the work of volunteers across the County is extremely

important and recognising the role and commitment of First Responder groups to our communities is more important than ever. The work of First Responders is often the difference between life and death and has had an impact on people and their families across the Municipal District."



Lorraine Gallagher (District Manager, Bray) and Cllr Melanie Corrigan (Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District) making a presentation to Bray Community First Responders at a civic reception honouring the work of community first responders.



Bray Garda have joined with Bray Lions Club in promoting 'Message in a Bottle', a project which enables people to provide vital medical information to First Responders. MIAB kits will now be available through Bray Garda Station and will also be distributed by Gardaí. Pictured at the launch of the project at Bray Garda Station are (from left) Community Garda Deirdre Murphy, John O'Toole (Bray Lions Project Leader), Superintendent Pat Connell and Community Gardaí Anthony Feery and Sean Murphy.

Wicklow RNLI assist fishing vessel with rope fouled propeller

Three fishermen were brought to safety by Wicklow RNLI on Thursday afternoon 22nd February after their vessel developed mechanical problems three miles southeast of Wicklow Head.

The all-weather lifeboat RNLB Bridie O'Shea slipped its moorings at 2.50pm from the South Quay and put to sea under the command of Coxswain Nick Keogh.

The lifeboat crew was alongside the casualty vessel ten minutes later. The fishermen had deployed their anchor after losing propulsion while fishing for whelk and contacted the Coast Guard for assistance. Conditions in the area at the time was wind south easterly in direction force 4, with moderate sea and good visibility.

Speaking after the call out Coxswain Nick Keogh said, 'We carried out an assessment on the 12-metre fishing vessel and found that a rope was fouled in one of the propellers, so we estab-



The RNLI crew after returning from the call out (Pic: RNLI Wicklow)

lished a tow and brought it back to Wicklow port.'

The fishing vessel was brought alongside the south quay just before 4.20pm, where the three crew were landed safely ashore.

When going afloat we would remind everyone

to check their engine and fuel, always wear a life-jacket or buoyancy aid, and carry a means of calling for help. Most importantly if you see someone in difficulty on or near the water, dial 999 and ask for the Coast Guard.

Sod turned on new Enniskerry Playground

Minister Simon Harris last week attended the sod turn of Enniskerry's brand new playground in Bogmeadow. This is long awaited progress that been soug and campaigned on for years by the Playground Committee pioneered by their chair Aisling Vickers and Secretary Róisín Briggs and local Enniskerry resident and Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District, Cllr Melanie Corrigan.



Minister Harris turning the sod.

The sod turning was also attended by Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Emer O'Gorman, District Manager Lorraine Gallagher, Cllr Rory O'Connor, Cllr Michael Ryan, officials, staff and Engineers from Bray Municipal District, and representatives from the Tidy Towns, Business Association and members of the Community.

The new playground will be inclusive and accessible to all ensuring a stronger and more vibrant community infrastructure. The sod turning event was attended by school pupils, local Tidy Towns groups, resident families and Wicklow County Council staff.

Minister Simon Harris said: "The turning of the sod in Enniskerry today was a milestone moment for local residents and families. For years now families Enniskerry have been crying out for a public playground. I am particularly delighted to hear that this playground will be fully accessible, making sure all kids can come to play."

"As a father of two very young children I'm keenly aware of the importance of well equipped playgrounds, indeed there are very few playgrounds I haven't visited with my two children so I'm delighted that there's soon to be another one. I want to pay tribute to Fine Gael and local champion Cllr Melanie Corrigan who since her election has cam-

paigned day and night to get this playground over the line.

"The construction of this playground would have not happened were it not for Melanie and her tireless work. Congratulations also to the Playground Committee, chair Aisling Vickers and Secretary Róisín Briggs who have done a huge amount of work to raise funds to make this playground a reality. Over €20,000 was raised by the community in Enniskerry to build onto this project which is really phenomenal."

Minister Harris concluded: "It was a really inspiring and positive event this morning, the joy this playground will bring to families and children across Enniskerry cannot be matched. I can't wait to see the project go to construction and get to the opening of the playground."

Cllr Melanie Corrigan who presided over the event expressed thanks to everyone involved in getting the Playground Project to this stage and in particular fellow committee members Aisling Vickers and Róisín Biggs and the whole Enniskerry Children's Playground and Bog Meadow User Group Committees for all the work as well as the staff and Engineers in the Bray Municipal District.

The Playground Committee was formed back in 2019, and have worked closely with the Bray MD



The sod turning for the new playground

and Wicklow County Council on the Plan.

The Playground plan will include inclusive equipment and use as much natural structural and timber components as possible to blend in with the natural surroundings of the Bog Meadow.

"What made the occasion even better was the attendance of the children from the local schools St Mary's and St Gerard's NS - Enniskerry and Powerscourt National School and the locals playschools as well as," said Cllr Corrigan.

In her address Cllr Corrigan welcomed them all, saying "All the children here are so welcome as they are the ones who will be using the playground, I have long wanted a space in Enniskerry that is safe, where parents, grandparents, and children can

socialise, exercise and have fun.

"It might be to late for my own children but not for all the young families raising their children here now, and I look forward to seeing them enjoying themselves in the playground."

Small and medium businesses urged to avail of ICOB Grant Scheme

Laurie Kearon, the Fine Gael candidate for South Wicklow has welcomed a significant boost for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region. As part of Budget 2024, the Government allocated a substantial €257 million towards the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant. This initiative underscores the Government's commitment to supporting businesses grappling with rising costs.

Wicklow County Council, with funds provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), will administer the grant, ensuring that qualifying businesses benefit from this critical support measure. The ICOB Grant is designed to offer a once-off financial injection to eligible businesses, helping them to navigate the current economic landscape.

The grant amount will be determined based on the Commercial Rates bill issued to each business in 2023. The grant details are as follows:

- Businesses that received a Commercial Rates bill of less than €10,000 in 2023 will be eli-

gible for a grant equating to 50% of their bill.

- Those with a Commercial Rates bill between €10,000 and €30,000 for 2023 will qualify for a flat grant of €5,000.

Wicklow County Council is in the process of developing an online system to facilitate the grant application and distribution, expected to go live in mid-March.

The deadline for businesses to verify their eligibility and submit the necessary documentation is set for 1st May 2024. Laurie Kearon encourages all qualifying businesses in South Wicklow to avail themselves of this grant to bolster their operations during these challenging times.



Pictured at a recent FG event are (left to right) Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Simon Coveney TD and Fine Gael Candidate Laurie Kearon who raised concerns of small businesses with him

Hogan slams decision to demolish Victorian building

Aontu's local election candidate in Bray, Ciaran Hogan, has criticised the decision to demolish the historic building at 1 Marlborough Terrace in Bray, calling it "idiotic".

"We were all saddened to hear that planning was granted for the demolition of a once beautiful historic building on the Bray seafront, 1 Marlborough Terrace. While I am glad that some business will be brought into the town it seems idiotic to demolish a building while there are so many vacant premises in Bray," said Mr. Hogan.

"On the very short walk up Bray Main street from the Dargle there are currently 18 vacant shops and business premises, and that's not including the Bray town center which stands mostly empty too. Bray business is literally decimated,

and we're not even in a recession.

"Only five years ago this building to be demolished was a successful Italian restaurant. How can it go from that to needing demolition in such a short space of time? The sad irony of it is the vacant Sea Life Center building is directly opposite the 162 year old building to be destroyed. Surely the Sea Life Center would make an excellent venue for an arcade or other kids amusment business," added Mr.Hogan

"This decision comes in the wake of the announcement that Dublin city allow planning permission for the





Bray Aontu candidate, Ciaran Hogan

beautiful Stephen's Green Shopping center building to be 'revamped' into a bland steel and glass modern creation losing its Victorian charm too. Bray has a

wealth of iconic victorian architecture, from Bray Dart station, to the houses along Quinnsborough and scattered elsewhere.

"It needs to be protected, cherished and honoured everywhere in Bray. We need to reinvigorate Bray, it's my mission to fill every premises with business, life and local community building enterprise before they too fall into disrepair and need demolition.

"The council should never have let it get this bad. It's this chaotic, sporadic and disjointed town planning that we need to get rid of if we are to have a beautiful, functional and prosperous town."

 <p>An Roinn Cosanta Department of Defence</p>	 <p>An Roinn Cosanta Department of Defence</p>
<p>ARMY RIFLE RANGES</p> <p>WARNING</p> <p>If you are walking in the countryside do not walk onto any of the Military Firing Ranges as you could be in GREAT DANGER at all times from unexploded shells and other dangerous ammunition RED FLAGS indicate LIVE FIRING Watch out for the warning signs AND TAKE CARE!</p>	<p>RAONTA RAIDHFILÍ AN AIRM</p> <p>FOLÁIREAMH</p> <p>Má bhíonn tú ag siúl faoin tuath, ná siúil isteach i gceann ar bith de na Raonta Lámhaigh Míleata mar d'fhéadfá a bheith i nDEARG-BHAOL i gcónaí de bharr sliogáin neamhphléasctha agus armlón contúirteach eile Is ionann BRATACHA DEARGA agus BEO-LÁMHACH Bí ag faire do na comharthaí foláirimh AGUS BÍ AR d'AIRDEALL!</p>

Prison sentence and lifetime ban for Wicklow woman convicted of cruelty to horses

On Wednesday 21st February 2024, at Arklow District Court, Ms Yvonne Coe (age 60) of Main Street, Tinahely, Co Wicklow was sentenced to three months imprisonment, having previously admitted charges under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 (AHWA).

In addition to the custodial sentence, Judge David Kennedy fined the defendant €5,000, and ordered that she pay a €500 contribution to ISPCA costs and €6,441.15 in costs

incurred by the Irish Horse Welfare Trust (IHWT). The court also imposed a disqualification order banning Ms Coe from keeping all animals for life. She was allowed three months to sell

or rehome any animals remaining in her care.

During an earlier hearing on December 13th last, ISPCA Senior Inspector Fiona Conlon gave evidence on a total of 9 horses

that were removed from lands and a barn off Main Street and Pound Lane, Tinahely on three dates in late July and early August 2022.

Ms Conlon described

how, on Friday 29th July she found several horses in varying levels of severe neglect, both physically and with regards to their living conditions. All the horses were visibly underweight, their hooves were overgrown, and their coats were matted with faecal material. One horse had two swollen legs and was struggling to walk. The defendant admitted under caution that veterinary attention had not been sought for this animal. The same was the case for a horse with a semi-protruded and swollen penis, despite the fact that the injury was sustained up to three years prior. The sheds in which the horses were housed had insufficient light and ventilation, and there were huge accumulations of dung.

Between 29th July and 2nd August 2022, eight horses were surrendered by Ms Coe and removed to the IHWT Centre for assessment and treatment. Together with Minister Noonan, I published the Irish Deer Management Strategy Group's report on developing a sustainable deer management strategy for Ireland last December. The development of the report, under the Chairmanship of Mr Teddy Cashman, involved a thorough process including public consultation and stakeholder meetings and led to 15 actions being put forward. Extending the deer hunting season is one of the priority actions identified to combat this increasing problem. There is no doubt that the wild deer population is having a significant impact on farmers. Land set aside for grazing livestock is being plundered and our forestry is being impacted by over grazing which prevents regeneration. I very much welcome this step in implementing the report of the Deer Management Strategy Group."



Pictured above and below left: two of the horses in states of neglect that were removed from lands and a barn off Main Street and Pound Lane, Tinahely



used by Ms Coe, it was in an emaciated state and had deformed hooves. This horse was also surrendered and required sedatives and pain relief to enable it to travel.

The court heard that, of the nine horses removed, three were ultimately euthanised as they could not be adequately rehabilitated to allow them to live pain free. A further two had permanent hoof damage that means they will no longer be able to be ridden.

Convicting the defendant, Judge Kennedy indicated that this was the worst case by far of animal cruelty in his 15 years on the bench and there must be a custodial sentence. He said that the photos were

extremely distressing and that there was a multitude of animals that suffered over a prolonged period of time all of which was very avoidable.

Speaking after the case Senior Inspector Conlon said "This successful prosecution is a significant step forward in ensuring the good welfare of equines in our community. We are committed to holding accountable those who neglect or mistreat vulnerable animals. This was one of the worst cases of

animal cruelty I have witnessed, every shed I entered I found yet another animal in horrendous condition and living in totally unsuitable accommodations. I want to acknowl-

edge Jill Power and her team from the Irish Horse Welfare Trust who helped me get them to safety. Unfortunately, the outcome was not good for three of the horses and they had to be euthanised on welfare grounds. Good equine welfare is not just about the ethical treatment of horses it is the foundation of their health and performance and the bond we share with these incredible animals."

The ISPCA is asking members of the public to continue to report any animal welfare concerns, by calling the ISPCA's National Animal Cruelty Helpline on 0818 515 515, report online here or email helpline@ispca.ie.

Deer hunting season is extended

Minister for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan TD and Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue TD recently announced the revision of the Deer Open Seasons Order. The announcement signals implementation of a key recommendation from the Report of the Irish Deer Management Strategy Group.

Changes to the Deer Open Seasons Order come into effect immediately, and mean an extension to the deer hunting season in the Republic of Ireland. Changes will allow for the continuation of the hunting of female and antlerless deer until 31st March 2024 and males until 30th April 2024. In addition, the 2024/2025 male deer hunting season will now begin at the earlier date of 1 August 2024.

The Deer Management Strategy Group was established by Minister McConalogue with support from Minister Noonan. The report makes a number of recommendations regarding deer management in Ireland, and the implementation of this first recommendation by the National Parks and Wildlife Service demonstrates that all stakeholders are committed to a renewed vision and strategy for the management of wild deer in Ireland.

On signing the new Statutory Instrument, Minister Noonan said:

"Deer are an integral part of the Irish landscape, but overgrazing by deer has become a serious pressure for native woodlands and for peatland habitats across Ireland. Extending the open season will provide land owners with greater flexibility for deer management and should, with time, help us to bring deer back to sustainable levels

locally and nationally."

Minister McConalogue added: "It has become clear that deer densities in areas across the Country are above a sustainable level for land management activities and are impacting on farming, forestry, nature conservation and biodiversity. Together with Minister Noonan, I published the Irish Deer Management Strategy Group's report on developing a sustainable deer management strategy for Ireland last December. The development of the report, under the Chairmanship of Mr Teddy Cashman, involved a thorough process including public consultation and stakeholder meetings and led to 15 actions being put forward. Extending the deer hunting season is one of the priority actions identified to combat this increasing problem. There is no doubt that the wild deer population is having a significant impact on farmers. Land set aside for grazing livestock is being plundered and our forestry is being impacted by over grazing which prevents regeneration. I very much welcome this step in implementing the report of the Deer Management Strategy Group."

Niall Ó Donnchú, Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service added:

"We are also making improvements to how we manage applications for deer hunting licences, with a new online por-

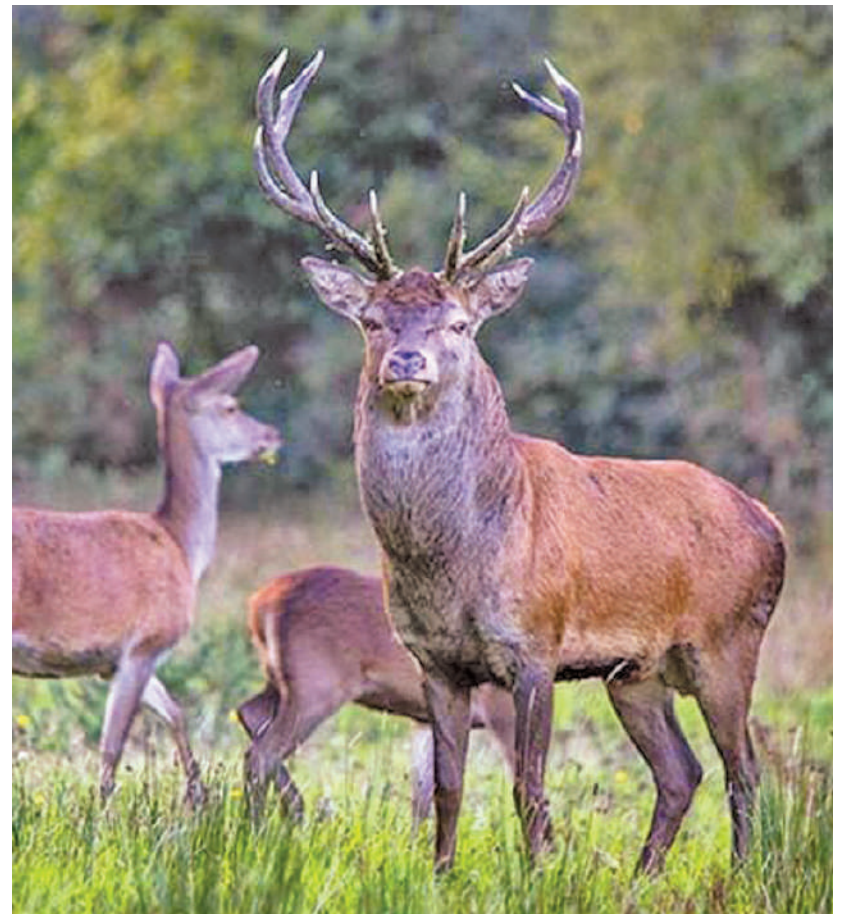
tal in development. This will become a one-stop-shop for all licences in due course. Applications for deer hunting licences for the 2024/2025 seasons will be managed through the new portal. This will provide a fast, efficient and user friendly process."

The Association of Hunt Saboteurs (AOHS) has strongly criticised the extension of the deer hunting season, claiming that it will lead to an anti-deer campaign that will be exploited by deer hunters with the support of the farming community. John Tierney, Campaigns Director, Association of Hunt Saboteurs, says that no independent scientific evidence exists that says a deer cull is needed.

"The conservation of deer has to be based on scientific research and not around hearsay and concerns based on a hidden agenda," said Mr Tierney.

According to Mr Tierney, "Minister Noonan and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, have allowed Ireland's small hunting community to extend the bloodsports season which will see an increase in deer killed for recreation."

The AOHS said that "rather than using deer as live targets it would be more humane if a rural based deer tourism industry was developed that would provide for deer watching activity."



Blessington's Regeneration Masterplan launched

Town Centre First includes plans to tackle vacancy and dereliction, providing measures to boost and regenerate Blessington

Blessington has successfully launched and published its Town Centre First Plan or Masterplan, one of the biggest ever programmes of investments in rural Ireland to tackle vacancy and dereliction.

Blessington is one of 26 towns across the country to have received resources to regenerate the town. Town Centre First includes plans to tackle vacancy and dereliction, providing measures to boost and regenerate Blessington.

The plan identifies specific projects to be pursued by community stakeholders. A new Town Regeneration Officer has been appointed in Wicklow County Council to drive the regeneration plans in Blessington.

Newtownmountkennedy has also been approved to develop Town Centre First Plans in the next phase of developments under the programme.

Minister Simon Harris said: "I am delighted that Blessington has plans approved and published for Town Centre First. These plans and the implementation of them by the new Town Regeneration Officer are really positive steps for the people in Blessington."

"The Town Centre First puts people and their vision for the community at the centre of its plans. These

plans are about ensuring that towns and villages benefit from funding as well as a strategic and coherent approach towards giving a boost to the community and especially tackle vacant and derelict properties.

"Blessington is one of 26 towns across the country who will be supported with funding to complete the plans. This level of investment is crucial for Blessington, crucial for Wicklow and crucial for our towns and villages across the country."

"We want to deliver stronger communities where you can live and work comfortably in boosted and active town and villages. This is about taking action in towns and making sure none of them start to decline. I am also delighted to confirm that Newtownmountkennedy will also benefit from Town Centre First Plans in the next phase with a €30,000 fund."

"I will continue to work alongside my colleague Heather Humphreys Minister for Community and Rural Development to make sure more towns in Wicklow benefit from this funding and these regeneration plans."



John Horan, Blessington Town Team, left, Deirdre Whitfield, Town Regeneration Officer, Wicklow County Council, and Liam Cullen, Blessington Town Team, pictured with Heather Humphreys, Minister for Rural and Community Development and Minister of State for Local Government and Planning, Kieran O'Donnell, at an event in Adare, Co Limerick, to mark local authorities' completion of 26 Town Centre First Plans. Picture: Andres Poveda.

New Baltinglass funding application to complete works

Cathaoirleach of the Baltinglass Municipal District, Councillor Edward Timmins has welcomed the application made by Wicklow County Council for the remainder of the works for the town centre under the RRDF funding (Rural Regeneration and Development Fund). Cllr Timmins has continuously advocated for an application for additional funding to complete works.

Speaking from Baltinglass, Cllr Timmins stated: "I welcome the application of €7.6m just submitted by Wicklow County Council for the remainder of the works for the town centre under the RRDF funding (Rural Regeneration and Development Fund). This would cover works from the bridge as far as the Lalor centre entrance on the R747 (an extension I had asked for 4 years ago when the original design was being drawn up). Works have already commenced on the town cen-

tre portion of the project. "This application also covers some further works on the Courthouse. The Courthouse, along with the Church, Abbey and Convent, is an iconic building that defines the built heritage of the town."

Regarding the need for a second funding application, Cllr Timmins pointed out: "A certain amount of funding was available but additional works required an enhanced allocation of resources. I have continuously pursued this matter over the



Cllr Edward Timmins

last few years. Wicklow County Council has now applied for to complete a revised proposal €1.1m of the €7.6m). This will secure the future of the

complex and reform it into a practicable and operational facility."

Regarding the positive impact of the development, Cllr Timmins noted: "This development, aligned with the streetscape works, the improvements to the town park and investment dealing with dereliction will change the face of the town in a positive way. We all desire an attractive and vibrant built heritage and community and I'm hopeful the end product will go some way to achieving this."

Greystones and Holyhead strengthen the twinning bond

St. David's Day celebrations took place in Holyhead, Wales, on March 1st, 2024. Holyhead and Greystones have enjoyed a twinning partnership since 2012. Attending the festivities were Cllr Stephen Stokes, Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District, and Former Mayor of Greystones, Kathleen Kelleher.

St. David's Day is their national day. The main event of the day saw over 500 local children pack out Holyhead Town Hall, which is equipped with conference facilities.

Cllr Stokes stated: "It was a remarkable occasion to see such passion from the pupils, teachers and the local people taking part. They love the Welsh nation, and it was an honour to be present with our close neighbours and friends. We are always given a warm Welsh welcome, and it is great to see our twinning relations continue to grow."

Kathleen Kelleher added: "There was great colour and fanfare on display. It was a lovely occasion and we were thrilled

to represent Greystones. The people of Holyhead are always so welcoming of Wicklow visitors."

During the trip Cllr Stokes and Kathleen Kelleher met with local rowing club representatives to explore further twinning collaboration. Cllr Stokes remarked: "Twinning has been a success between Greystones and Holyhead. This is because of the wide range of groups and clubs that have embraced the bonds of friendship across the Irish Sea. Over the years, this has included Sea Cadets, football, choirs and more. Both towns have a proud maritime history, and there is strong interest to develop a potential link with rowing."



Cllr Stephen Stokes and Kathleen Kelleher with Cllr Hywel Williams with local children in Holyhead Town Hall

Cllr Stokes and Kathleen Kelleher had a number of meetings with community representatives in Holyhead to exchange information and discuss future visits. Visitors from Holyhead will attend the 2024 St. Patrick's Day Parade in

Greystones. Additionally, Holyhead Santa is scheduled to return to Greystones in November 2024.

Cllr Stokes concluded: "We are grateful to Santa and his elves. They always bring great joy to the community."



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) & PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED) NOTICE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT M11 Junction 19 Weighbridge Facility

In accordance with the provisions of PART XI, of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), notice is hereby given that:

Wicklow County Council proposes to undertake the development of a Weighbridge Facility to the Southeast of Junction 19 on the M11. The proposed development comprises a new entrance from the R772 to a weighbridge facility including a weighbridge plus weighbridge admin building with seven on-site parking spaces, public lighting, landscaped areas and drainage systems for both surface water and foul water including all associated ancillary works.

In accordance with Article 120 (1) (b) (i) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), Wicklow County Council have concluded following the completion of an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

Where any person considers that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, they may, at any time before the expiration of 4 weeks beginning on the date of publication of this notice, apply in accordance with the provisions of Article 120 (3) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), to An Bord Pleanála for a screening determination as to whether the development would be likely to have such effects.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 250 (1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), Wicklow County Council has carried out a screening of the proposed development to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. Accordingly, Wicklow County Council has determined that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site and that therefore, an Appropriate Assessment of the proposed development is not required.

Plans and particulars of the proposed development can be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of Wicklow County Council, Station Road, Whitegates, Wicklow Town during opening hours from 9:00 am to 3.30 pm Monday to Friday and also at Arklow Municipal District, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow during opening hours from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays, for a period between **Thursday 14th March 2024 to Tuesday 16th April 2024**. Plans and particulars will also be available to view on the Council's Online Consultation Hub at www.wicklow.ie/Living/ConsultationHub

Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development would be situated, may be made in writing to the Senior Executive Officer, Transportation, Infrastructure Delivery & Emergency Services, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Station Road, Whitegates, Wicklow Town on or before **noon Tuesday 30th April 2024**. Submissions may also be made by email via the following address n11m11@wicklowcoco.ie. All submissions should be marked "M11 Junction 19 Weighbridge Facility – Part 8 Statutory Consultation".

Further information is available from the Transportation, Infrastructure Delivery & Emergency Services Department, Wicklow County Council on 0404 20100.

The Winners

National Tidy Towns Awards

- * County First & Gold Medal: Arklow
- * National Endeavour Award: Lacken
- * County Second & Gold Medal: Wicklow
- * County Third & Gold Medal: Greystones
- * Silver Medal: Bray
- * Bronze Medal: Blessington
- * Runner up SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AWARD: Greystones Tidy Towns
- * Winner ROYAL INSTITUTE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF IRELAND AWARD: Arklow Tidy Towns
- * Highly Commended EPA CIRCULAR ECONOMY AWARD: Knockananna Tidy Town
- * Overall Winner SUPERVALU SCHOOL AWARD: Blessington Educate Together National School

County Wicklow Awards

Small Towns Main Street Award

- 1st - Knockananna TT
- 2nd - Hollywood TT
- 3rd - Glenealy TT
- Commended - Grange Con Tidy Towns

Medium Towns Main Street Award

- 1st - Enniskerry TT & Aughrim TT
- 2nd - Tinahely TT & Delgany TT
- 3rd - Roundwood TT
- Commended - Avoca TT & Newtownmountkdy TT

Large Towns Main Street Award

- 1st - Blessington TT
- 2nd - Arklow TT

Tidy Private Estates Awards

- 1st - Burgage Manor, Blessington
- 2nd - Sugarloaf Crescent, Bray
- 3rd - Woodpark, Rathdrum
- Commended - Sika Woods, Enniskerry; Clover Hill, Bray; Ashton, Blessington

Tidy Local Authority Estates Awards

- 1st - John Paul Ave, Arklow
- 2nd - Kyle Park, Knockananna
- 3rd - Parnell Park, Rathdrum
- Commended - Kenmare Heights, Greystones; Kindlestown Park, Greystones; Gleann Chill, Glenealy

Sustainable Development Awards

Biodiversity Wildlife & Natural Amenities Award

- Roundwood Tidy Towns
- Blessington Tidy Towns (Commended)

Built Environment Award

- Tinahely Tidy Towns

Business Award

- Susan Collins - Home of Hair (Greystones TT)
- Centra Vevay Road (Bray TT)(Commended)

Circular Economy Award

- Tinahely Tidy Towns

Climate Change Award

- Automatic Plastics (Tinahely TT)
- Blessington (Commended)

Coastcare Award

- Arklow Coast Care
- Bray Coast Cleaners (Commended)

Communal Gardening Award

- Tearmann Community Garden, Baltinglass (Joint winner)
- Community Beds Project (nominated by Greystones TT) (Joint winner)
- Clover Hill Community Group (Commended)
- Community Seed Ark (nominated by Bray TT)

Energy Award

- GDSEC Solar Meitheal Programme
- Poppies Cafe, Enniskerry (Commended)

Greening an Event Award

- Blessington Tidy Towns

Landscaping Award

- Tinahely Tidy Towns
- Knockananna Tidy Towns (Commended)

Local Champion Award

- Aidan Doyle, nominated by Tinahely TT
- Una Roe, nominated by Bray TT
- Frank Coyne, nominated by Greystones TT
- Paul Butler, nominated by Blessington TT
- Anne Martin, nominated by Newtownmky TT

Schools Awareness Award

- St Mary's College, Arklow
- Blessington Community College (Commended)

Schools Biodiversity Award

- Kilcommon NS
- Blessington Community College (Commended)

School Climate Change Award

- Scoil Mhaire Realt na Mara
- SS. Michael and Peter JNS (Commended)

School Garden Award

- St. Fergals NS
- Glenealy NS (Commended)

School Trees Award

- Wicklow Educate Together NS

Sustainable Food Award

- Commonground + (Bray Tidy Towns)
- Blessington Tidy Towns (Commended)

Sustainable Tourism Award

- Newtownmky Tidy Towns
- Delgany Golf Club (Commended)

Trees Award

- Tinahely Tidy Towns
- Greystones Tidy Towns (Commended)

Water Conservation Award

- Mysproutman (nominated by Greystones Tidy Towns)
- Tinahely Tidy Towns (Commended)

Water Protection of Resources Award

- Greystones Tidy Towns

Waste Minimisation Award

- Planet A Zero Waste Shopping (nominated by Bray Tidy Towns)
- Knockananna Tidy Towns (Commended)

Green Sports Club Award

- Wicklow Rovers AFC

Youth Champion Award

- Leah Mulhall (nominated by

Green Awards handed out to Tidy Towns and local groups

The Tidy Towns & Sustainable Development Awards were held on Monday 4th March at Clermont Campus in Rathnew. The event celebrated the work of Tidy Towns Groups, schools, sports clubs, residents associations, community groups, schools and businesses contributing to the sustainable development of the county.

In the national competition, Arklow stood out for again securing the highest marks in the county, and Lacken was honoured with the Endeavour Award. This year marked a significant achievement for towns across the county, with Wicklow Town and Greystones also receiving coveted gold medals at the national level in 2023.

Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, congratulated all the volunteers for their invaluable contributions to their communities saying: "The gold medals achieved by Arklow, Wicklow and Greystones, together with Bray taking a silver medal and Blessington achieving a bronze medal sums to the highest number of medals ever awarded for towns in the county in one year. This could not have been achieved with the efforts of our Tidy Towns volunteers."

There was a strong emphasis on giving back to the communities and improving the sustainability of businesses through innovative measures. Biodiversity initiatives across the county were recognised, for multiple projects from barn owl boxes to bat walks and Wicklow's fabulous coastline was not forgotten.

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, highlighted that it is not just community groups but also our schools that are driving these initiatives, stating that "Wicklow County Council recognises



Minister Simon Harris and Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, with WCC's Biodiversity Officer Hannah O'Kelly and the WCC Climate Action Team

that our schools are the engines of change within our communities and celebrates the fact that the future sustainable development looks bright when viewed through the eyes of our younger citizens."

Schools receiving awards in 2023 included Scoil Mhaire Realt na Mara in Brittas Bay, with St. Mary's College in Arklow, Wicklow's Educate Together and St. Fergals and Kilcommon National Schools. These schools are lauded for their commitment to environmental stewardship and the exploration of biodiversity.

Finally, the tireless work of exceptional individuals was spotlighted through the Local Champion and Youth Champion Awards received by Aidan Doyle

(Tinahely); Una Roe (Bray); Frank Coyne (Greystones); Paul Butler (Blessington); Anne Martin (Newtownmountkennedy) and Leah Mulhall (Blessington).

Breege Kilkenny, Director of Service, Wicklow County Council, congratulated all the winners and everyone who participated in making our communities more sustainable and vibrant, noting that "The dedication and enthusiasm displayed by these individuals and groups contribute significantly to the overall well-being and environmental health of our county."

Speaking at the event Minister Simon Harris said: "Wicklow is proud to have some of the most active, energetic, green led community groups and Tidy Towns from the

country. I was delighted to attend this event that showcased and awarded the leadership role played by schools, sports clubs, businesses, residents associations and local groups in making our towns and villages more sustainable and climate friendly."

"The work produced by Tidy Towns Groups, local community groups, businesses throughout the county is truly second to none when it comes to climate action and sustainability," Minister Harris continued. "At the heart of their work is their love for the community and their ambition to create stronger, more vibrant and ecological green communities."

"Behind every clean street or park often lies a group of committed individuals who in their own

personal time decided to make the towns and villages in Wicklow just that little bit cleaner. The dedication of local groups, residents associations, schools and Tidy Towns groups reflects the resilience of people in Wicklow to strive for better maintained public spaces. We are so lucky in Wicklow to have such tireless unsung heroes constantly working to better improve our areas.

"I want to say a huge congratulations to all participants of tonight's event and to the organisers who put together a really well attended and fun night. I had the huge privilege to engage with some of the workers in Wicklow County Council's Climate Action team who told me about some of the really exciting projects coming down the pipeline for our county."

"This was also great opportunity to catch up with residents associations and local groups and take on board some of their concerns for Wicklow County."

Minister Harris concluded: "If anybody is interested in Tidy Towns please get involved, whatever your skills or interests, your local Tidy Towns committee will have a project that you can get involved in to assist in the development of your community."

For information on your nearest Tidy Towns group contact the Environmental Awareness Office by phone Lo-call: 1890 22 22 76 or by Email: eao@wicklowcoco.ie.



Minister Simon Harris and Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, pictured with representatives from the winning Tidy Towns and local groups.

'Nobody should face cancer alone'

Wicklow woman calls for community to go all in against cancer this Daffodil Day

Wicklow woman and breast cancer survivor, Robyn Finucane is calling on her local community to go all in against cancer for the Irish Cancer Society's Daffodil Day, which takes place on Friday, 22nd March.



Enniskerry woman and breast cancer survivor, Robyn Finucane

After coming across a story on social media of a young woman dying of breast cancer, mother of three, Robyn from Enniskerry, decided to check her breast and found a lump.

Reflecting on receiving the news, Robyn said: "When they told me I had cancer, I think I was just in shock. I felt like I was in free fall. The staff were brilliant in that moment, they were so reassuring and helpful, but it still floored me. Everyone tells you 'don't go near Dr. Google', but you're up the walls with worry. You can't help yourself. I only did research using trusted sources and I found the Irish Cancer Society website really helpful and supportive during that period."

The Irish Cancer Society is there to ensure that every person affected by cancer has a place to turn to, the support they need and the hope that there will come a day when no one in Ireland dies from cancer.

Thanks to the amazing generosity of the Irish public the Irish Cancer Society invests in groundbreaking cancer research and delivers crucial free support services for people affected by cancer, throughout Wicklow. In 2023, the public's generous support provided:

- Over 680 free lifts to bring Wicklow based cancer patients to their treatment.
- Over 400 free counselling sessions to people living in Wicklow.
- Over 110 nights of free Night Nursing care to allow cancer patients in Wicklow to die at home surrounded by loved ones.

For more information about Daffodil Day visit <https://www.cancer.ie/daffodilday>.



Artist Brooke Peterson Sloane and Debbie Reid at the Chrysalis Exhibition in Wicklow Library

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Wicklow fashion designer to showcase collection at Ireland's biggest fashion show

Wicklow fashion designer Silvia Ortega will showcase her latest collection at Ireland's annual ARC Fashion Show on Thursday 28th March at the RDS Concert Hall in Dublin. Now in its ninth year, the ARC Fashion Show will feature the biggest line-up yet with 25 fashion designers, five accessories designers and eight milliners. Renowned Irish author and cancer survivor Emily Hourican will inaugurate the show which is produced by Eddie Shanahan.



Sylvia Ortega in her studio

All funds raised will be dedicated to supporting ARC Cancer Support Centres who offer vital psychological, emotional, practical, and educational assistance to individuals of all ages affected by cancer and their caregivers.

Based in Wicklow Town, Silvia initially moved to Ireland from her native Spain to discover new cultures. This journey ultimately rekindled her love for all things fashion, leading her to enrol in a Fashion Design

Course in Dublin Institute of Design. Now, Silvia specialises in sustainable fashion, embracing timeless designs crafted from natural fabrics that cater to the modern, eco-conscious woman. Attendees at the ARC Fashion Show will see her latest collection at the RDS.

A hugely popular segment of the show is The ARC Angels sequence, and this year will see four ARC service users join the professional models on the runway to showcase eight exquisite millinery creations, inspired by the elements: EARTH, AIR, FIRE, and WATER. These show stopping pieces are created by Irish milliners including Aura, Leonora Ferguson, Aoife Harrison, Aoife Kirwan, Wendy Louise Knight, Ailish McElroy, Emily Jean O'Byrne, Siobhan Daly and each will wear dresses designed by Roisin Dockry



Model wearing Sylvia Ortega

Junior Musicals students recount day on set of Cillian Murphy film

On a grey day in March last year, three Junior Musicals siblings from Greystones found themselves dressed in 80s style pyjamas on a set in Wicklow town for a short scene in a film that was rumoured to be adapted from the Claire Keegan novel *Small Things Like These* and star Cillian Murphy.

Ellie (10), Ethan (9) and Iarlaith (5) King are the children eating their breakfast in a scene where Cillian, as Bill Furlong, is talking to their mother about dropping coal to their house for Christmas. Officially they

had no lines, but during one take Iarlaith, just 4 at the time, piped up to say 'Christmas? That was ages ago', before director Tim Mielant was able to shout cut.

The three youngsters report having "an amazing day" and being treated "like celebrities" by a welcoming cast and crew.

Although it was inevitably a memorable day for the youngsters it may be a while before they can fully appreciate how lucky they are to have shared a scene together and with Ireland's most celebrated actor.



Siblings Ethan, Iarlaith and Ellie King

Bray's Youth Theatre returns to the stage with original drama about dementia

For the first time since 2020, Mr Sands Youth Theatre will bring a full-length stage play to the Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre on the 5th and 6th of April.

A Life Unpacked is an original drama created by a cast of young people and directed by Artistic Director Zita Monahan McGowan, with movement direction by Kayleigh Horan.

Mr Sands Youth Theatre was founded in 2017 by a group of teenage artists with a strong desire to make theatre. Since then, their members have travelled from Kilkenny to Belfast and even to Tirana, Albania, with plays, short films, and audio dramas.

'Who is it that can tell me who I am?' - King Lear

An elderly man's possessions are packed into box after box. It's for the best. He can no longer stay in that big house alone, can he? As his descendants slowly dismantle and squabble over his belongings, the old man walks through his home



for the last time.

Memories of his life are unearthed. Some he would rather forget forever, and others he'll do anything to keep. He tries to hold onto the fragmented pieces of his life before they're encased in cardboard and stuffed in some forgotten attic.

After their incredible performances of *The Heights* by Lisa McGee in National Theatre Connections 2023, Bray's youth

theatre returns to the stage with a dynamic and heartfelt play about memory, how it holds us together and sometimes pulls us to pieces.

Casey Hallahan, Managing Director at Mr. Sands Youth Theatre, said: "It has been a privilege to watch how the Mr Sands members have developed over the last three years as theatre-makers, friends and citizens."

Julie Kelleher, Artistic Director at Mermaid Arts Centre,

said: "Mermaid Arts Centre is really proud to be an ongoing partner with Mr. Sands, supporting them in their exciting and inventive programme."

A Life Unpacked will have two performances at the Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray - Friday the 5th of April at 8pm, and Saturday the 6th at 3 pm. Tickets for the event are limited and can be purchased at www.mermaidartscentre.ie

The Seaside Arts Club

Mermaid Arts Centre, March 29th, 7:30pm

Join local artists for the inaugural Seaside Arts Club at Mermaid Arts Centre. There will be artists, musicians and comedians on hand to spread awareness of the brilliance of the local community.

Artists Dee Dooley and Luke Christoffersen will have some recent works on show, local singer songwriter Hannah Grace will take to the stage ahead of the comedy line up. The host for the evening is Bray comedian Keego, fresh from a run of headline shows around the country as well as a short tour of New York's comedy clubs.

Also performing will be comedians Janet Dunne, Kevin Gildea (Father Ted) and Joe Rooney (Father Damo in Father Ted) closing the night with more comedy.

Tickets are €16. For more information or to buy tickets, see <http://www.mermaidartscentre.ie/whats-on/events/the-seaside-arts-club>.



I Can't Believe It's Not Ireland!

Whale Theatre, Friday 15th March, 8pm (doors 7pm) Tickets €20 available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550.

Join Paddy on a hilariously insightful journey through the history of partition and the Ireland of the future...



Imagine this. It's 2032. The people have spoken on both sides of the border and Ireland is a brand new 32-county country. There's a new flag. A new anthem. There's even a new capital! As Unionists holiday in the south, discovering the imperial joys of 'Royal' Dublin - southerners discover the ancient landscape of Ulster beyond the retail outlets of Newry and Titanic Belfast. Magical things happen when you create a new country - where EVERYTHING is on the table - and it's exciting.

Leave all your preconceptions at the door. It's not a United Ireland. It's not an 'agreed' Ireland. It's not 'shared' - nor is it 'new'. It's simply - 'I can't believe it's not Ireland!' But first...we have to get there....

Show Length: 2 hours (including interval)



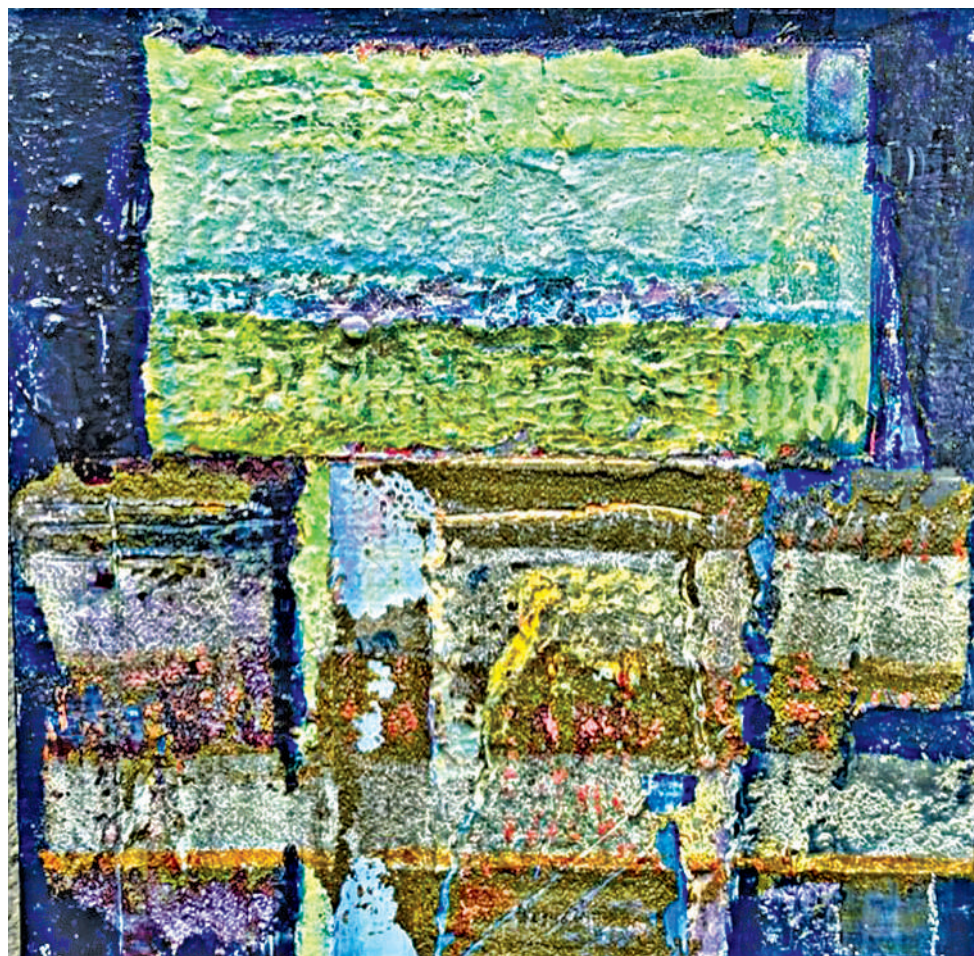
The South Wicklow Drama Festival Committee are pictured in Jim Byrne's, Carnew, for the launch of this year's festival which will take place from Saturday 15th March to Saturday 23rd March (with exception of Sunday 17th). The Committee once again has a wonderful and varied line up of plays with many of the local groups taking part along with Drama Groups from Counties Laois and Dublin.

This year's committee are: President: Fr. Martin Casey; Chairman: Eamonn Doran; Vice Chairman: Brendan Doyle, Secretary: Kevin McEvoy; Asst. Secretary: Lorna Doran McEvoy; Treasurer: Debbie Furlong; Asst. Treasurer: Jacqui Mulholland; P.R.O: Mary Doran; Social Media: Lorna Doran McEvoy. Committee Members: Tommy Kavanagh, Jacinta Kavanagh, Raymond Brennan, Kieran Tyrrell, Mandie O'Keeffe, Mary Doyle, Dougie Doyle. Safety Officers: Tommy Kavanagh, Kevin McEvoy, Gavin Nolan & Ivan Jordan. The adjudicator for the festival will be Imelda McDonagh, ADA

Tread Softly: an exhibition by Noreen O'Hanlon

Signal Arts Centre, now until March 16th

'Tread Softly' showcases Noreen O'Hanlon's evocative, atmospheric compositions. Each painting expressing her desire to visually communicate the things that sing to her, and the elements that resonate with her in her natural environment. Weather, sky, sea, stones, shells, plants and the natural cycle of growth, death, decay and renewal are all reflected in her work. Her art is a translation of her natural environment into an abstract composition, responding to nature in all its forms.



Bogland Doorways

A two-week residency at Cill Rialaig artists retreat in Co Kerry kicked off this collection of paintings.

The residency gave her the physical and ideological space to delve deeper into the work, allowing for complete immersion in the process of making art.

Her paintings investigate both materiality and aesthetics. Her thought process is slow and considered, working in layers, combining colour and texture. Exploring, discovering, and learning new techniques and processes are all part of practice.

Noreen is an artist based in Dublin.

Her painting practice has consistently evolved since 2005. She held a solo exhibition, The Symphony of Colour, at the Dun Laoghaire Art Gallery in 2015. Her paintings have been included in many group exhibitions. She is a professional member of Visual Arts Ireland. She is also a member of Artnet DLR.

Wicklow dancer entertains on first episode of TG4 talent show

A new series of An Ríl Deal was back on our screens on Sunday March 10th as TG4 and Adare Productions are looking for the next big thing in the World of Irish Dancing.

Fantastic performers of all styles of traditional dance will entertain viewers over 8 episodes on the show; from Step dancers, Sean-Nus dancers to Set dancers, even a fusion of all styles will be seen. There are no age restrictions on the dancers- young and old and everything in between will be showing us their moves! Solo dancers, Duos and Groups. The first episode featured Naoise Hannon from Wicklow Town.

Keeping a close eye on all the talented hopefuls are our 3 judges, all experts in the field of Irish dance.

Each week will feature different dancers as they battle it out with showstopping numbers in the hopes of reaching the finale to be crowned winners of An Ríl Deal.

This is the ultimate free-for-all Irish dance competition and a celebration of all the Irish dancing traditions.



Naoise Hannon from Wicklow Town

Raise some dough for brain injury survivors

Get ready to raise some dough this month to support the work of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (ABI Ireland) and help 'bake' the world a better place!

'Room To Improve' Star and Founder of Davey Nutrition, Daniel Davey and Football Legend, Paul McGrath will be taking on the baking challenge. Will you join them? Daniel Davey spoke about the importance of nutrition in supporting brain health and why he is taking part in 'Bake For Brain Injury': "I am delighted to support Acquired Brain Injury Ireland in their fundraising campaign 'Bake For Brain Injury' to raise awareness. Nourishing our bodies with the right food is not only essential for physical performance but also plays a crucial role in supporting brain function. Together we can encourage people to prioritise their health and contribute to a brighter, healthier future."

Individuals, community groups, schools, businesses, families and friends across Wicklow are invited to host their own 'Bake for Brain Injury' fundraising event at any point during the month.

'Bake for Brain Injury' is a hugely important event on the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland calendar, enabling the national organisation to raise vital funds to support survivors of brain injury as they work to rebuild their lives. It coincides with Brain Awareness Week, which takes place this year between 11th and 17th March - a global cam-

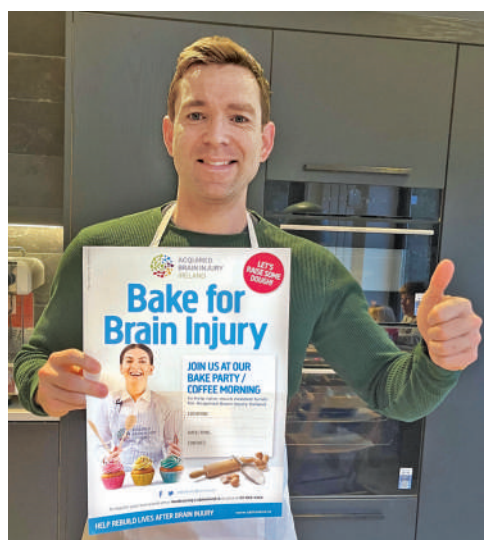
aign to raise awareness and understanding of the brain and brain conditions, as well as the need for more investment in services, research and prevention. Former Ireland Footballer, Paul McGrath is looking forward to taking on another fundraiser for ABI Ireland: "I am excited to join Acquired Brain Injury Ireland for another fantastic fundraiser, sure it's always a no-brainer for me. I'm always reminded of the brilliant work they do whenever I visit their Wexford service. Taking part in fundraisers like Bake for Brain Injury is a way for me to support brain injury survivors and help them to get the services they need. It's also a chance for me to taste some home baking at the coffee day in Wexford!"

Every single year in Ireland, an estimated 19,000 people acquire a brain injury, resulting in life-altering, dramatic change. These injuries happen suddenly and are often traumatic, caused by road traffic accidents, stroke, assaults, concussion and viral infections like meningitis. Because each brain injury is unique, every survivor needs dedicated supports and a tailor-made rehabilitation plan.

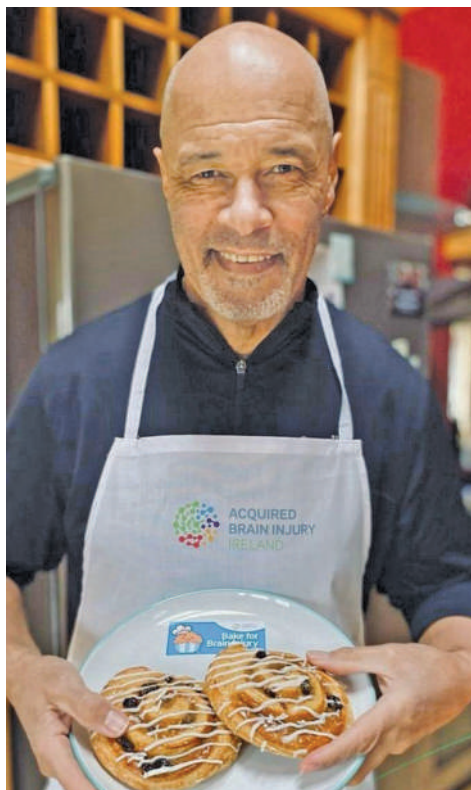
Acquired Brain Injury Ireland offers the specialist care that they need. As

Ireland's leading provider of community neuro-rehabilitation for those ages 18 to 65, the organisation supports an estimated 1,100 people annually, as well as their families and carers. Interim Head of Fundraising, Marissa Tuccelli invites everyone to get involved and raise some dough: 'This March we're asking everyone to get behind brain injury survivors. Have a go at baking something new, treat others to your showstopper, or simply join a bake event with friends, family or colleagues. We want this year's 'Bake for

Brain Injury' fundraiser to be the most successful yet, so we encourage you to give what you can to help those impacted by brain injury to rebuild their lives." Find out more and register now to take part in 'Bake for Brain Injury' at abiireland.ie/Bake-For-Brain-Injury. Once registered, supporters will receive a special fundraising pack which includes the new Acquired Brain Injury Ireland apron to help you get your bake on. There is also guidance on how to start fundraising, online or in person.



Daniel Davey



Paul McGrath



Emily Jane and Mandy Jackson at the Chrysalis Exhibition in Wicklow Library

RECRUITMENT



Job Title: Grounds and Maintenance Person
Location: St Gerard's School, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Position Overview: We are seeking a dedicated Grounds and Maintenance Person to join our Maintenance Team and contribute to the upkeep and enhancement of our school's grounds. The ideal candidate will be passionate about maintaining a clean, safe and aesthetically pleasing environment for our students, faculty and visitors.

Brief Job Description:

- Perform regular grounds maintenance tasks such as mowing, edging, weeding, pruning, leaf blowing, power washing etc.
- Planting and caring for trees, shrubs, flowers and other vegetation across the campus.

- Collaborate with other members of the Maintenance Team to support various campus events and carry out general indoor maintenance duties as instructed by the Maintenance Manager.

Requirements/Qualifications:

- Proven experience in ground maintenance, landscaping, or related field preferred.
- Additional certifications or training in landscaping or horticulture a plus.
- Valid driver's license with a clean driving record.
- Proficient in minor maintenance work/repairs.

How to Apply: Please email a covering letter with attached C.V. to: Joy Hunter, Director of Finance & Administration bursar@stgerards.ie

Closing date for applications is Friday 15th March 2024.

PUBLIC NOTICE

EVENT LICENSE APPLICATION WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

CUPOLA EVENTS LTD. of 6-9 Trinity St, Dublin 2 gives notice of intent to apply to Wicklow County Council within the next two week period for a license to hold an outdoor music event in accordance with part XVI of the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Beyond The Pale will comprise of live musical and comedy entertainment with associated camping to be held at Glendalough Estate, Co. Wicklow on Friday 21st June, Saturday 22nd June and Sunday 23rd June 2024 with entertainment from 4.00pm on Friday June 21st to 12.00 midnight on Sunday June 23rd. Associated parking and campsites will be available from 12.00pm on Friday June 21st until 3.00pm on Monday June 24th.

The event will have a maximum attendance of 12,500 persons plus 1000 staff and artistes with camping for a maximum of 12,500 persons plus 1,000 staff and artistes.

The license application may be inspected at the offices of Wicklow County Council during office hours for a 5 week period from the date of receipt of the application. Submissions or observations may be made to Wicklow County Council within a 3 week period from the date of the receipt of the application.

Signed: Cupola Events LTD Date: 5th March 2024

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Ian & Louise Stanley seek 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 Annacrivey Woods, Kilmolin, Enniskerry, County Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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, Co Wicklow, A63 XF65. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

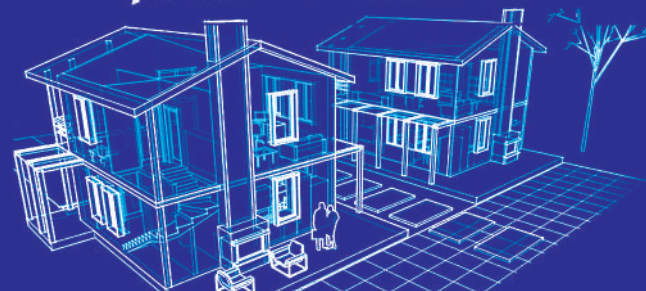
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

William Power intend to apply for modifications to the previously permitted scheme Reg. Ref: 22/419 in back garden of No.2, Castle Villas, Killincarrig, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, A63 HK80. The modifications will comprise of a reduction in floor area from 121.8m2 to 99.3m2 as a result of reduced width of the overall building, revisions to the internal configurations to the permitted unit resulting in a change from previously permitted 3 bedrooms to 2 bedrooms now proposed, modifications to elevations, site boundary and all associated site works and landscaping. To include for retention permission of retaining wall along northern boundary wall. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

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**THE
MIRACULOUS
PRAYER**

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

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Businesswomen brave snowstorm for International Women's Day celebration

Dozens of businesswomen gathered on Friday, March 1st, to celebrate International Women's Day at a lunchtime event organised by Network Ireland Wicklow. This year's celebration centred around the theme "Inspire Inclusion," reflecting a commitment to building a diverse and inclusive environment for all.

The attendees were treated to a lineup of speakers supporting the theme of inclusion. Pam Beacom and Tony Ryan from the Blue Dolphins Special Olympics Club shared insights into how the club creates an inclusive atmosphere for athletes and their families. Deputy Jennifer Whitmore discussed her journey into political life and emphasised the importance of increased female representation in politics. Stephanie Roche, the renowned Ireland and Shamrock Rovers striker, shed light on the importance of inclusion for women and girls in the realm of sports.

Network Ireland members took the opportunity to showcase their diverse array of products and services, adding an entrepreneurial flair to the celebration. The day culminated in a raffle that raised just over €2,000

for the Blue Dolphins Special Olympics Club, underlining the Wicklow community's commitment to supporting inclusivity initiatives.

Dawn Leane, the President of Network Ireland Wicklow, said "International Women's Day is an opportunity to spotlight the challenges that women face. This year's theme of 'Inspire Inclusion' is particularly meaningful to me, given my background in diversity and inclusion. It expands the conversation beyond the usual corporate discussions. Our fantastic committee, members, and sponsors collaborated to ensure it was a day to remember."

The event served as a powerful reminder of the importance of fostering inclusion across various aspects of life.



Dawn Leane, the President of Network Ireland Wicklow

Businesses warned not to depend on the luck of the Irish for protection during the St Patrick's Festival weekend

Last year Network Ireland recorded a 56% increase in business security breaches during March compared to the previous month, February. A high volume of that increase came from retail and hospitality industries, and businesses with buildings vacant for a time during the month.

Netwatch attributes the increase in March to the St Patrick's Festival weekend and has warned businesses in Wicklow of a potentially similar increase this year. The year-on-year incidents recorded by Netwatch showed an increase of 33% from March 2022 to March 2023.

Colin Hayes, Netwatch MD, observes: "Each year, the St. Patrick's festival weekend concerns our customers as their security requirements increase, particularly for those dealing with increased footfall or numbers. This also applies to vacant buildings during the weekend. We know business owners are concerned for their staff and the overall business, and many have already taken increased measures to protect their assets."

Netwatch urges Wicklow businesses to remain vigilant and strengthen their security measures, focusing on prevention and deterrence this long weekend. The company, which provides proactive video monitoring for thousands of client sites in Ireland, advises organisations which will be either open or closed to consider the following actions:

1. Check for weaknesses: Address known security vulnerabilities before the long weekend. By
2. Access Control: Limit access to certain areas of your business to authorised personnel only and implement keycard or keypad entry systems if necessary.
3. Operating Hours: Ensure you inform your security company of any

changes operating hours over the St Patrick's Day weekend. Establish a communication plan for your employees to report any security concerns or incidents promptly. Ensure that there is a designated point of contact for security-related issues. Work closely with local emergency response agencies to coordinate security efforts

and report any suspicious activity promptly.

6. Staff Training: Businesses may need temporary staff to handle the increased workload during St. Patrick's Festival weekend. Proper training on security protocols will be helpful in mitigating risks.

7. Post-Event Evaluation: After the St. Patrick's Day weekend, conduct a thorough evaluation of your security measures to identify any areas for improvement.

Bray is set to host yet another spectacular St. Patrick's Festival

Get ready for a vibrant display of Irish heritage, community spirit, and cultural diversity as Bray's St. Patrick's Festival and Parade returns for another spectacular celebration.

The festivities kick off on Thursday, March 14th and continue until Bank Holiday Monday, March 18th, 2024, the festival promises an unforgettable experience for locals and visitors alike.

Come and join the celebrations in the county Wicklow town as the event offers a diverse range of activities suitable for all ages and interests. You can witness the colourful and energetic Bray Parade, enjoy live music and dance performances, experience the exhilarating rides at Bird's Euroshow Funfair, or immerse yourself in the whimsical world of puppet shows. For those who prefer a more relaxed pace, there are

informative talks and even yoga available, and unique face painting designs to choose from. With so much to do, there's something for everyone to enjoy!

The St. Patrick's Day Bray Parade will be a celebration of different cultures, communities, and organisations. Why not gather along the parade route to witness the impressive 1,500 participants as they journey through the town in a truly spectacular fashion?

Again, this year there will be a quiet zone also at the junction of Quinsborough Road and Seymour Road.

There is also a new wheelchair-accessible viewing area adjacent to the viewing stand. Places are limited and are on a first come first serve basis.

The Parade Grand Marshall this year is Bray's 'Person of the Year' Dessie O'Toole. Dessie who is a former bus driver, has raised

more than €1 million for local charities

There will be road closures in place on Sunday, March 17th from 1 pm until after 3 pm to facilitate the Parade route.

Cllr Melanie Corrigan, Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District, said

"As Cathaoirleach, I am thrilled to witness the enthusiasm and joy that the festival brings to Bray. It not only showcases the talents of our community but also reinforces the bonds that make Bray a truly vibrant and inclusive place to call home."

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