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Tuesday 17th September 2024 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

STATE TO BUY WOODS?

Almost 200 acres of agricultural zoned land in Delgany adjoining the Glen of the Downs and Kindlestown Forest has come up for sale for €6.5m. If purchased by the State, this would potentially allow for a doubling of this nature reserve, an invaluable national treasure and well-known Wicklow landmark.

Social Democrats TD for Jennifer Whitmore has written to An Taoiseach Simon Harris and Minister for the Environment, stressing the need for a pivotal intervention to purchase this land to expand the Glen of Downs.

In less than 48 hours, a petition set up by Deputy Whitmore which urgently calls on the State to purchase land gathered over

3,000 signatures.

"There has been huge positivity from the public in response to this proposal and, in particular from people living in Wicklow. People here understand the importance and ecological significance of this woodland and they want a bigger and better Glen of the Downs for future generations to enjoy," said Deputy Whitmore, who is the Social

Democrats spokesperson for Climate and Biodiversity. "I hope the Taoiseach and the Ministers for Environment and Biodiversity listen to the thousands asking for this crucial investment in our invaluable national treasure."

Deputy Whitmore added: "Sadly, the growth and vibrancy of the woodlands have been stifled in recent years as



Men at work: Adam Kelly (left) with Dermod Dwyer, Peter Murtagh and Donal Flynn of the Friends of the Cliff Walk group that has begun restoring access to the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk, closed by Wicklow County Council for over three years. See story page 7.

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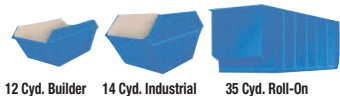
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it is surrounded by agricultural land on all sides and dissected by a major road.

"I have previously raised the need for the Glen of the Downs to be expanded and in November 2023, I made a proposal to both the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Coillte encouraging them to explore the possibility of working together on a project to allow the Glen of the Downs naturally regenerate and join up with Kindlestown Forest.

"The purchase of this site in Delgany by the State would allow for a once in a lifetime opportunity to the join these two forests and provide a rare opportunity to expand this majestic and beloved oak woodland. It is important to remember that Ireland has committed to the EU's Nature Restoration Law, which

will set binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems - particularly those with the most potential to capture and store carbon. The measures will cover at least 20 per cent of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030, and ultimately all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

"The Government has already set aside €3.5 billion in its Climate and Nature Fund for these types of projects. The Glen of the Downs is known nationally but it holds a special place in the hearts of those who live near it and have grown up exploring and visiting it. I have written to Taoiseach Simon Harris, urging him to support this initiative in the interest of our constituents in Wicklow and visitors to this spectacular area."

Councillors from Greystones Municipal

District are also advocating for the purchase of the land by the State.

Cllr Tom Fortune, Cathaoirleach of the Greystones District stat-

ed: "I chaired a meeting of local Councillors.

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For further details or to book go to:
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Local Enterprise Office Wicklow, Wicklow County Campus, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow
Phone: 0404 30800 Email: enterprise@leo.wicklowcoco.ie



The Harbour Ukuleles is over eight years playing in The Harbour Bar Bray on Tuesday evenings with a regular attendance of over twenty uke strummers and played at The Harvest Festival in Monkstown earlier this month, will give their third performance this summer on The Bandstand Bray on Sunday 22nd of September. The H UKES was created by Pat Byrne who teaches ukulele and guitar in Cabinteely Community College and has taught online during Covid sponsored by Bray Library and also taught ukulele in Blessington library after Covid. Pat also organised a "flashmob" in Dunlaoghaire for the Ukuhooley Festival and also brings the world famous Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain to Ireland for concerts in The National Concert Hall. Pat says he will be teaching a Beginners Ukulele Course in BIFE Bray starting soon.

A Citizen Science Presentation

Laragh / Glendalough citizen scientists have been gathering and recording data on water quality of our upland streams since 2022. The citizen science group, which is part of Laragh / Glendalough Tidy Towns, will present their findings at a public event in Laragh Mountain Rescue Base on the 19th September at 7:30pm. All are welcome to come along to learn and hear more about these small but vitally important upland streams.

Wicklow Lions Quiz Nights

Wicklow & District Lions Club members have announced that their annual Quiz Nights will restart in October. At this point the committee would like to hear from charity clubs and groups who would like to raise funds. As slots are always in huge demand it's important to register as soon as possible so a particular Thursday evening can be allocated.

Contact 'wicklowlionsireland' on Instagram or 'Wicklow & District Lions' on Facebook.

Voices of Ukraine Choir

The Voices of Ukraine ladies choir with Sean Olohan will perform in Coolnagreina Tiglin in Greystones for Culture Night, September 20th. Entertainment will commence at 8pm. The ladies will be joined by special guests on the night which should prove to be a very special evening of Ukrainian and Irish culture. Everyone very welcome free of charge.

Bray Cualann Historical Society

Nigel Kingston will present his talk on 'The Meath Road, Bray' at 8pm on Thursday September 19th in The Royal Hotel, Main Street, Bray. All are welcome - admission is free for members and €8 for non-members. Those wishing to join the Society can do so at this meeting.

A walk for Parkinsons

On Saturday, September 21st Parkinson's Ireland are hosting 'A Walk in the Park for Parkinson's' in various locations across Ireland to raise funds and awareness, with the Wicklow location taking part at Avondale at 11am. There are various loop walks available, short and long. Tea and refreshments available afterwards. Visit parkinsons.ie to register.

GARA Annual General Meeting

The Greystones Active Retirement Association AGM will be held GARA on 19th September in Kilian House, behind Holy Rosary Church at 2:30pm. Lots going on for those fifty years and older. Annual memberships subscriptions and renewals of €25 will be accepted on the day. Come along with your ideas and suggestions, you will receive a very warm welcome. Further GARA information from GARAGreystonesPlus@gmail.com or from Kathleen Kelleher on 087 2845 465.

Light it up Gold table quiz

Childhood Cancer Ireland's Light It Up Gold Table Quiz will take place on 19th September, supported by Sugarloaf Lions Club. Greystones Municipal District Offices and Greystones Library will be lit up gold. Supermarket collections will be taking place in SuperValu Charlesland, Dunnes Stores NTMK, Tesco Greystones. A Table Quiz will be held in Greystones Rugby Club, 19th September, 7:30pm. €10 per person, €40 per tables of four. Details from Margaret Gerrard (086 399 2651), Sugarloaf Lions Club (086 399 2651) or email sugarloaflionsclub@gmail.com.

Delgany Tidy Towns Clean-up

Delgany Tidy Towns are organising a clean up weekend in the village on Saturday and Sunday, 28th and 29th September, 10am to 1pm each day. "We are looking for lots of volunteers of all ages from across the village to participate. Just an hour of your time will make a big difference!" Meeting each day at the Carmelite Monastery Gates. A volunteer post clean up BBQ will take place on Sunday afternoon - Details to follow on social media closer to the date. You can find all the information about the clean up via <https://delgany.online/dtt>

New document provides accessible information about Council consultation process

Cllr Dr Caroline Winstanley, Social Democrats councillor in Bray was delighted to support Wicklow County Council's corporate plan public engagement process. Cllr Winstanley has produced an easy read document that provides accessible information about the consultation process.

Every five years, Wicklow County Council has to develop a corporate plan which tells the public what the council's priorities are for the next five years. The public are invited to give their ideas as part of the consultation process.

Previously there has been no inclusion of an easy read guide, which means that people with literacy difficulties may have struggled to understand how they could participate in the consultation. The National Adult Literacy Agency has identified that one in six adults in Ireland have literacy difficulties.

A key theme of the council's 2024-2029 corporate plan is

"people" and the development of inclusive communities.

Cllr Winstanley states that "part of developing inclusive communities is ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities to access information and have a say in issues that affect them, especially for such important consultations like the corporate plan."

Cllr Winstanley says she is pleased that Wicklow Council are taking important steps to make their information more accessible.

If you would like to access the easy read it is available at:

<https://www.wicklow.ie/Living/Your-Council/Corporate-Plan>.



Cllr Dr Caroline Winstanley.

Birdwatch Ireland Autumn outing

BirdWatch Ireland are just back from their summer break and are delighted to let you know about their next Branch event taking place on Saturday 21st September at 10am our annual autumn outing to Kilcoole to look for Autumn migrants.

Meet at Kilcoole Train Station carpark, see Google

Pin. For public transport options see TFI Journey Planner.

Bad Weather Protocol: If a Met Eireann Orange or Red warning is in force at the location where and when a branch outing is due to take place then members should assume that the outing is cancelled.

Digital Skills one-to-one clinics at participating Wicklow libraries

Wicklow County Council Library Service has invited adults across Wicklow to take part in free digital skills one-to-one clinics with a qualified tutor. The new 'DigiLit' Digital Skills clinics are open to adults over 18 years old and are completely free of charge, with clinics being offered at Arklow, Blessington, Greystones, and Wicklow town libraries.

The 45-minute sessions are aimed at those thinking of buying a smartphone, or who own one but want to learn more, including how to download apps, as well as help with library apps such as Borrow Box and e-services, online school portals, government health-care and welfare services, how to book flights or shop online or renew Motor Tax online. Whatever digital skill you want to learn, the DigiLit skills clinics have the answer!

Contact your participating library as follows: Arklow Library, 0402 39977 or email arklowlibrary@wicklowcoco.ie; Blessington Library, 045 891740 or email blissing-ton-lib@wicklowcoco.ie; Greystones Library, 01 2873548 or email greylib@wicklowcoco.ie; Wicklow Library, 0404 67025 or email wicklib@wicklowcoco.ie

DigiLit is supported

by The Adult Literacy for Life Strategy (ALL), SOLAS Learning Networks, Wicklow County Council Library Service, Kildare and Wicklow Libraries Ireland Community Libraries - Board (KWETB), Wick-DRCD.



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STATE TO BUY WOODS?

Continued from page 1

"We believe that it is important for us to work together, to bring this land under public control. As our population continues to expand, we must ensure that we do everything that we can to promote wooded and biodiverse areas. Afterall, Wicklow is the Garden of Ireland. We believe that this measure would be widely supported by the public."

Green Party councillor Lourda Scott is a founding member of the Climate & Biodiversity SPC on Wicklow County Council. Cllr Scott has submitted a motion on purchasing the land with

the support of multiple Councillors. This will be discussed at the September meeting of the Greystones Municipal District, which the public are welcome to attend.

Cllr Scott thanked her colleagues for their support in seconding the motion. She added: "Land like this rarely comes up for sale. It is in a prime location for our local environment. I have previously met with local environmental activists who have campaigned for a long time on preserving this natural green corridor to the existing Kindlestown Woods and Glen of the Downs areas. I want to thank them for all of their work in highlight-



Jennifer Whitmore TD has organised a petition and a public meeting.

ing what a vital habitat this area is and it's potential for the wider community. I will do my best to push for purchase of this land by the State. We are

in a Biodiversity emergency and need to act now."

Cllr Orla Finn outlined: "I believe that we need to emphasise the critical importance of preserving this land for future generations. This agricultural land potentially holds high ecological value. It could serve as a natural extension to the existing Kindlestown Woods and Glen of the Downs areas. These areas are a vital habitat for a range of wildlife species."

Cllr Louise Fenelon-Gaskin is also 100% behind the proposal to acquire the land. She added: "The proposed acquisition would align with the Government's ongoing commitment to protect biodiversity, and promote environmental sustainability. This is also set out in the National

Biodiversity Action Plan and the Climate Action Plan. As local Councillors, we believe that purchasing this land would support local and national climate goals by enhancing carbon sequestration. It would further support the area's rich woodland ecosystems."

Cllr Stephen Stokes pointed to additional benefits of securing public land. Cllr Stokes stated: "We should explore the possibility of creating an additional amenity with this land. For example, this could include nature trails. Last year I visited the City of Bellevue in Washington, USA. The Deputy Mayor, Jared Nieuwenhuis, advised me that their Council is consistently seeking to acquire new park spaces, because that's what local residents want. I believe we should take a similar approach. Securing this land could serve as a positive template for other projects across County Wicklow."

Green TD Steven Matthews has contacted Minister of State for Heritage Malcolm Noonan to assess the opportunity to purchase the land for nature conservation objectives.

Deputy Matthews said "This represents an opportunity for the state to acquire land to connect Kindlestown Woods to the



Mary Heaslip and Ann Houston at the Wicklow Cancer Support 20th anniversary celebration in Wicklow Golf Club.

Glen of the Downs. There are many good people working in the Delgany and Greystones community who are seeking ways to protect nature and provide some natural amenities for residents and visitors and I would like to meet them soon to look at the possibilities for this site.

"The area has seen huge increases in housing and population growth. I doubt there will any appetite or evidence to

support zoning this land for housing. Therefore we should look at what this land or parts of the land could be used for to provide community gain and nature projection.

"The Greens fought hard to pass the Nature Restoration Law and that law has objectives for nature restoration in urban areas. Linking Kindlestown old woodlands to the Glen's old woodland and providing a safe ecological corridor through the

area would be a good use for this land."

Deputy Whitmore will hold a **Public Meeting on Tuesday September 24th** to discuss her campaign urging the State to purchase the land. It will take place at **7pm in The Horse and Hound in Delgany**. Deputy Whitmore will also be joined on the evening by Biodiversity experts to discuss the many benefits that expanding and nurturing the woodland will have.



Greystones councillors Orla Finn, Louise Fenelon-Gaskin, Tom Fortune, Lourda Scott and Stephen Stokes, who are calling for the State to buy the land. Photo by John McGowan.

OPEN EVENING



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Deputy John Brady in Kilmurry Cemetery.

Brady calls on Council to install water supply at Kilmurry Cemetery

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called on Wicklow County Council to install a water supply at Kilmurry Graveyard in Newtownmountkennedy. Describing the current situation as unnecessarily placing difficulties in front of the families and friends as they tend to the graves of their loved ones, he spoke of the difficulties that elderly relatives faced as they were forced to carry water with them to the cemetery to water plants and maintain the upkeep of loved one's graves.

Deputy Brady said that a lot of the pipe work is in place in the cemetery, all that is required is for the council to do is to approve a connection, get the water turned on, and the issue can be resolved. "I believe that Wicklow County Council should and could agree to provide a water supply to the graveyard at Kilmurry cemetery in Newtownmountkennedy. The local community has been asking that a water supply be provided for a long number of years at this stage, and it really is not too much to ask for. "Anybody that visits Kilmurry cemetery can clearly see how well maintained that the graves are. It is obvious that visitors to the cemetery care deeply about the upkeep of the graves. But the absence of a water supply leaves it that much more difficult to tend to the graves of loved ones. It is particularly challenging for older people who are forced to carry water with them to wash the graves, water flowers and plants. "With a lot of the necessary water lines in place, all that is required for the council to do is to give approval for the connection and the matter can be easily resolved. As things stand, the current situation is not fair, and it is unnecessary. I am again calling on Wicklow County Council to install a water supply to Kilmurry cemetery at the earliest opportunity."

Bray coastal dump restoration a success

Green TD Steven Matthews recently visited the site of the former coastal dump site in Bray which has now completed its restoration works. Deputy Matthews worked with both Wicklow County Council and Dun Laoghaire Council during his time as a councillor to engage them in seeking a solution to the legacy dump.

Speaking after visiting the coastal protection scheme Matthews said, "It's a success for water quality for sea swimmers, a success for our marine environment and a success for public recreation and amenity. For decades this old dump site was eroded by waves and you could clearly see old waste, plastic and rubbish being exposed and ending up in the coastal waters. I was determined that this environmental disaster should be remedied and I brought Wicklow County Council and Dun Laoghaire Council together to seek an engineering solution. Both councils collaborated to design a coastal protection scheme and a soft landscaped area to top off the old dump site. "It's a massive improvement to the area, there's no more erosion or old waste leaking from the site and this has positive impacts on water quality, especially for the hundreds of sea swimmers that use our Seafront. "The dump had been a problem for decades but nobody seemed to be doing anything but talking about it and I sought urgent action. It was legacy landfill site for Bray waste and was used up to the late 1960s with ownership of the land split between the two councils. I knew it would only get fixed by sitting both councils down together, forming a plan of action and applying for funding. "With sea level rise, higher tides, storm surges and erosive run off from increased rainfall the entire dump would have eventually end up in the sea if protection was not put in place. It took a little longer than I expected but decades of environmental damage is now fixed and this is a big success story for Bray and the harbour area.



Deputy Matthews at the former dump site before and after the works.

"During the planning process I suggested the inclusion of a walkway at the site with a view to incorporating it into bigger plans for a northern coastal and cycling route and I'm glad to this has been provided for. Green Party councillor Erika Doyle is working on developing a walking and cycling route through the Harbour to connect with Dun Laoghaire cycling network and coastal walks. We have great potential to improve amenity and recreation at our harbour. The priority for any development in the area must be for improving community use for swimmers, water sports, boat users and the public that like to stroll around this beautiful location and all done to the highest standards of nature protection," concluded Deputy Matthews.

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Fr. Gerard Deegan, Rev Jack Kinhead and Fr. Eamonn Crossan at the Wicklow Cancer Support 20th anniversary celebration in Wicklow Golf Club.

'CJEU verdict exposes colossal mistake to appeal case'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has said the CJEU verdict finally brings to an end the “shameful mishandling” of the Apple Case that saw this Government “go to extreme lengths” to refuse taxes that were lawfully owed to the state. He described the decision by Fianna Fail and Fine Gael to drag the case through the courts for eight years as “unforgivable”.

Deputy Brady said: “This verdict ends one of the most extraordinary episodes of Irish politics. Over the last 8 years we have seen Fianna Fail and Fine Gael go to extreme lengths to stop the state collecting taxes that we were lawfully owed. “If Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael got their way, we would be over 13 billion euro worse off. The sheer incompetence with which this has been handled cannot be overstated. I always believed that this ruling was inevitable. The evidence was clear. That is why I was always adamant that the correct decision was to accept the European Commission's ruling in 2016. “Instead, we saw the government spend mil-

lions upon millions of taxpayers' money on legal fees acting against the national self-interest. “It was a colossal mistake by Fianna Fail and Fine Gael to put Ireland's reputation on the line when it was likely they would lose. The idea that the government were taking this appeal to protect Ireland's reputation was never credible. They were covering their own backs. “Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael knew state aid had been violated when they had overseen the design and administration of this sweetheart deal. That is why they have denied reality and resisted accountability at every stage. “It was only after

being repeatedly challenged by Sinn Féin that the Government ended the practice of facilitating stateless companies with no tax residence anywhere in the world. “This case has never threatened our national sovereignty or our tax code. It concerned the preferential treatment for one company. We must remember that Fine Gael, supported by Fianna Fail, refused to

take over 13 billion euro during at a time when they were imposing austerity on people. Austerity that saw Fine Gael cut the blind pension, close hospital beds, cuts to social welfare and the minimum wage. “We can never fully undo the harm done to people during austerity, but this verdict gives us a chance to finally move on from this shameful episode.”



John Brady TD.

'€13bn can help to end homelessness'

In a statement, Tiglin have said that the €13bn windfall following the CJEU verdict “presents the state with a remarkable opportunity to tackle the homeless crisis once and for all”.

Tiglin chairman Aubrey McCarthy said “In 2016, myself and our CEO Phil Thompson addressed the Joint Houses of the Oireachtas outlining proposals to help solve the housing crisis. Back then, we were assured by the then minister for housing Simon Coveney stated that the Government would eradicate homelessness by 2020. Since then, we have witnessed record growth in homeless figures and an Irish public that feels cheated and let down.

“The rescue boat has arrived. This money must not simply be 'assigned to a cause', we need to see impact and not repeat the mistakes of the past.”

Tiglin stated “This opportunity must not be missed and without further delay a Task Force should be assembled with a defined budget, clear KPI's and let us make the difference that our citizens have been calling for.

“It is vital that it is not seen that money will simply solve this issue. Leadership, defined direction and accountability is needed first and foremost. It is too simplistic to say that money will build houses. In an Irish context, we have been found wanting when it comes to addressing the housing needs of our nation.

“We see repetitious uses of the phrase 'homeless crisis'. The evidence of this is record numbers of people within emergency accommodation, expanding housing lists and a housing market that is struggling to meet demands. The issue here is our response has not been a 'crisis response'. In a crisis people move quickly, policies change and collective action occurs to address the problems.

“In recent years we have seen Ireland's track record in crisis response. During COVID we witnessed unity and the power of multi-agency responses. Legislation was changed quickly [...] During the commencement of the invasion of Ukraine, again we witnessed government agencies, NGO's and volunteers come together [...] These responses happened quickly, we worked in less than perfect scenarios. This was a crisis response. Currently, we are not seeing this response or leadership to our housing crisis. The Government now has a substantial amount of money available to be carefully allocated to housing initiatives that will provide lasting benefits for Irish families.”

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<h4>ART</h4> <p>KA Art Portfolio Preparation KC Fine Art Practice</p> <h4>DESIGN</h4> <p>DA Graphic Design DD Architecture Design & Technology DN Jewellery Making & Woodcraft DI Furniture Design & Carpentry/Joinery DC Fashion & Textiles DK Garden Design</p> <h4>MUSIC</h4> <p>MI DJ Techniques & Music Production MJ Music Production MK Music Performance MF Sound Engineering</p> <h4>COMPUTING & ENGINEERING</h4> <p>NB Computer Science HV Engineering Pre-University</p> <h4>SPORT</h4> <p>EA Sport, Exercise & Fitness Instruction EC Personal Trainer, Strength & Conditioning ED Soccer Coaching & Sports Management EF Sports Injury & Massage Therapy / Pre-University Physiotherapy</p> <h4>ANIMAL CARE</h4> <p>HI Animal Care & Management Pre-University HJ Animal Science Industry HX Equine Studies</p>	<h4>SOCIAL STUDIES & CHILDCARE</h4> <p>OA Special Needs Assistant (Primary & Post-Primary) OB SNA & Disability Studies (Level 6) HD Early Learning & Care / Childcare HE Social Studies & Community Care</p> <h4>HAIR, BEAUTY & WELLNESS</h4> <p>FJ Professional Make Up & Hairstyling FG Hairdressing - Senior Stylist FH Barbering FD Nail Technician & Salon Administration</p> <h4>SCIENCE</h4> <p>HS Forensic Science - Pre-University HK Science - Pre-University HZ Food Science with Dietetics - Pre-University JF Pharmacy Assistant JJ Pharmacy Technician HU Applied Ecology and Biodiversity Studies</p> <h4>BUSINESS</h4> <p>JA Business Management & Administration JC Business Management - Advanced Certificate JD Accounting Technician LD Business Tourism Advanced Certificate JT Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship</p> <h4>HOSPITALITY & TOURISM</h4> <p>LA Tourism, Reception & Event Management LH Restaurant & Bar Management LE Culinary Arts Advanced LG Pastry, Baking & Barista</p>	<h4>ADULT LEAVING CERT</h4> <p>RB Adult Leaving Certificate</p> <h4>HEALTH</h4> <p>HB Nursing and Midwifery Studies - Pre-University HH Healthcare Assistant & Activity Coordinator HP Occupational Therapy Assistant JK Emergency Care Studies (Pre-paramedic, Fire & Ambulance) HW Applied Psychology (Advanced)</p> <h4>FILM & COMPUTER GAMING</h4> <p>MB TV & Film Production - Advanced MC Immersive Media Production Degree (Hons)</p> <h4>ACTING & DANCE</h4> <p>PB Acting for Stage & Screen Advanced PE Dance Technique, Performance and Choreography - Advanced</p> <h4>PART-TIME COURSES</h4> <p>ZE Holistic & Wellbeing Studies ZA Woodcrafts (Level 4) ZB ICDL (level 4) ZC Computers for beginners (Level 3) ZD IPO medical Computer Assistant (Level 5)</p>
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Public warned to not disturb seals

Wicklow County Council is reminding beach users, and particularly dog owners, to avoid disturbing seals when they visit the coast at this time of year.

September to December is a particularly important time for grey seals, as it is the breeding season during which the adults seek safe sites to “haul out” on land.

These are beaches where the animals return year after year to breed, rest, moult and engage in social activity. It is also the time when they give birth to a single pup which is born with distinctive white fur and needs to stay on land for a number of weeks while it is being weaned by its mother.

In recent weeks there have been a number of sightings of seal pups all along the Wicklow coast and this is a time when they are particularly vulnerable to disturbance by humans and dogs. It is important

to note that disturbance can easily occur when seals become aware of human presence even at a distance.

People and dogs are asked to maintain a minimum distance of 100m from seals that are on land as coming close to them will cause stress and can lead to the abandonment of pups by mothers.

Orphaned pups have very little chance for survival and often Seal Rescue Ireland (SRI) must intervene by bringing a seal into rehabilitation whereas without human disturbance the pup would have been successfully cared for and weaned in the wild.

If any member of the public comes across a seal it is very important to keep a distance, never touch and never attempt to return a young animal to the sea.

The Wicklow coast is a much-valued public amenity and the public can play a huge role in helping to conserve this protected species. Seals are legally protected under the Wildlife Act and it is illegal and dangerous to approach them or to allow dogs to do so.

Wicklow Municipal District are working in tandem with Seal Rescue Ireland to raise public awareness of this issue by erecting information signs at known 'haul out' sites and restricting access to these areas as required, particularly at Brides Head Beach, Wicklow Town.

For more information and to report sightings, please visit www.sealrescueireland.org or contact the Seal Rescue Hotline on 087 1955393.



Seal at Brides Head.

'Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan a failed opportunity'

The Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan launched today 10th September is a failed opportunity to urgently put in place the necessary measures to prevent the extinction of this iconic bird of prey species, according to BirdWatch Ireland, the Environmental Pillar and An Taisce.

This plan has been in the works for over a decade, during which time Ireland's Hen Harrier population has declined by one third. However, despite the years of work that went into developing this plan, it is sorely lacking in ambition and in tar-

geted actions to set the species on the way to recovery, the three organizations claim.

“It will not, in our opinion, meet the legal requirement nor press pause on the losses of the Hen Harrier, never mind restore its population. The

plan sets out actions which are vague and lacking in detail, without defined targets or measurable timelines for delivery,” they said.

“The new plan does not address the shortcomings which the Environmental Pillar, BirdWatch Ireland

and An Taisce highlighted in the draft plan. It is particularly concerning that the plan has not improved, despite a massive response from the Irish public calling for an ambitious plan through the national public consultation. Over 2,400 sub-

missions from members of the public called for a strong and effective plan to save the Hen Harrier.

“The plan fails to define targets at a national or population level that will ensure that Ireland's Hen Harrier population is restored to levels that ensure its survival into the future (i.e., favourable conservation status). In effect it is a road map without a clear destination.

“The loss of habitat for nesting and foraging, and other pressures associated with the afforestation of our uplands is known to be one of the main threats to Hen Harriers. Although the plan recognises this, it unfortunately fails to set out clear targets or a mechanism for restoration of habitats needed for the recovery of the species; without these, it is difficult to have faith that the plan will deliver any meaningful change for Hen Harriers and upland biodiversity.

“As the largest landowner in the Special Protection Areas that are designated for the protection of the Hen Harrier, Coillte has a golden opportunity to be a champion for these amazing birds by committing to ceasing reforestation of its plantations and restoring its afforested peatlands. But after 10 years of round-table discussion led by government, there is no detail in the Plan whatsoever on these critical actions which would deliver significant benefits to the Hen Harrier and other wildlife, water quality and climate; and also on the State's obligations to the Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan, the Climate Action Plan and the National Land Use Review.”



A female Hen Harrier. (David Leckie / BirdWatch Ireland).

John Lusby, Raptor Conservation Officer with BirdWatch Ireland, said: “The Hen Harrier is the canary in the coalmine for our upland ecosystems, and it is incredibly sad to think that many of our uplands can no longer sustain Hen Harrier populations. These are supposed to be some of our wildest and most important areas for biodiversity but clearly this is not the case, due to the loss of heath, blanket bog and grassland habitats and the associated declines of species like Curlew and Skylark, among others. We have been on record to say that the Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan would be a litmus test for wider nature restoration. Unfortunately, the plan as published does not pass that test and is a missed opportunity for this iconic bird and a disappointing start to plans for nature restoration in Ireland.”

Fintan Kelly, Agriculture and Land Use Policy and Advocacy Officer with the Environmental

Pillar, said: “While there are some potentially positive developments in the new plan, overall our hopes that the Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan would finally commit to necessary, urgent and decisive actions to deliver on the legal requirement of the Threat Response Plan to halt and reverse the known threats and pressures faced by the Hen Harrier have been dashed. It is impossible for us to support the plan, as many actions in their current form are too vague and not targeted enough to ensure real change, change that is urgently needed.”

Dr. Elaine McGoff, Environmental Pillar spokesperson and Head of Advocacy with An Taisce, said: “Our role has always been to act as advocates for the best outcomes for the Hen Harrier, its habitats and the farming communities that support them. We remain committed to ensuring that an effective threat response plan is delivered for the Hen Harrier and upland com-

munities and will continue to advocate for the necessary actions to save this iconic bird. The current draft plan and the status of the Hen Harrier and its habitats represents an unacceptable failure by the State, to deliver on both Irish and EU law in respect of the species and its habitats. We will not allow the Government to quietly quit on this incredible bird species.

“In order to restore Ireland's Hen Harrier population, we believe any plan must: Protect all nationally important Hen Harrier breeding and wintering grounds from afforestation, forest management activities, wind energy development and other pressures; Restore habitat across all nationally important breeding and wintering sites using clear restoration targets and timelines; Guarantee long-term support for farmers through well-funded results-based schemes across all nationally important breeding and wintering grounds.”



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Men at work

A local group's mission to re-open the Cliff Walk

A small group of Greystones residents, who say they are fed up and frustrated by Wicklow County Council's lack of progress in re-opening the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk, have taken the matter into their own hands.



Pictured is Peter Murtagh, one of the initial four activists that have started the clean up of the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk that has been closed for three years.

The Cliff Walk has been closed for three years due to rock falls and land slippage and is now very overgrown in parts.

Peter Murtagh, Dermot Dwyer, Donal Flynn and Adam Kelly started the clean up two Saturdays ago and say they have been overwhelmed with the positive response received so far. A Facebook page, 'Friends of the Cliff Walk' has gained 500 members in less than a week and there have been thousands of posts and comments.

While grateful for the offers of support, they don't want people to just turn up to help. "We need to manage the numbers as we are using bush-cutters and powerful trimmers and the thing we don't need is an accident. So contact us by email or Facebook before turning up and we will put you to work."

It is believed that Bray Municipal District had gone to tender for some of the rock fall remediation work but Iarnrod Eireann are demanding that any contractor has at least €50 million indemnity insurance.

On the Greystones side there is an issue with land slippage but Donal Flynn points out that a short term solution can overcome this: "We simply have to move inland for a few metres and lay sleepers for about 30 metres and it would be safe for walkers. They do this on many other walks and trails."



Catherine Doyle and Saranna Condell at the St. Colman's Family Open Day in Rathdrum.

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Pottery/Ceramics Improvers	10 Weeks - Time: 7.00-9.00pm	Fee €175
Woodwork for Beginners	10 Weeks - Time: 7.30-9.30pm	Fee €175
Dressmaking	10 Weeks - Time: 7.00-9.00pm	Fee €125
Crochet	10 Weeks - Time: 7.30-9.30pm	Fee €125
Graphic Design	10 Weeks - Time: 7.00-9.00pm	Fee €130
Digital Photography	10 Weeks - Time: 7.30-9.30pm	Fee €130

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Conversational Irish 2 (Intermediate)	10 Weeks - Time: 8.30-10.00pm	Fee €100
English for Speakers of Other Languages	10 Weeks - Time: 7.00-8.30pm	Fee €100

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Pilates: 7.00 Class	10 Weeks - Time: 7.00-8.00pm	Fee €100
Pilates: 8.00 Class	10 Weeks - Time: 8.00-9.00pm	Fee €100
Tai Chi: 7.00 Class	10 Weeks - Time: 8.15-9.30pm	Fee €100
Tai Chi: 8.15 Class	10 Weeks - Time: 7.00-8.15pm	Fee €100
Yoga: Beginners	10 Weeks - Time: 7.00-8.15pm	Fee €85
Yoga : Beginners and Beginners Plus	10 Weeks - Time: 8.15-9.30pm	Fee €85

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bridge Beginners	8 Weeks - Time: 7.00-9.00pm	Fee €130
Beekeeping For Beginners	9 Weeks - Time: 7.30-9.30pm	Fee €115
First Aid And Cardiac First Responder	10 Weeks - Time: 7.30-9.30pm	Fee €125
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Firefighters welcomed to Wicklow on charity cycle across Ireland

Wicklow and New York firefighters last week took part in this year's Friends of Firefighters charity event which saw members of the New York Fire Department and firefighters from around Ireland come together to cycle from Dublin to Kinsale while raising funds for Aoibheann's Pink Tie and the New York based Friends of Firefighters charity.

Members of the Wicklow community were out in force to welcome the firefighters in Bray, which was the first stop on their 360km journey to Kinsale. The firefighters then continued their journey through to Greystones where children from local national schools, lining the route and cheering on the cyclists as they headed towards their next stop in Wicklow Town.

Jennifer Whitmore TD said "I was delighted to be in Bray and Grey-

stones today to meet and support the firefighters taking part in this cross-country charity cycle. A huge amount of thought and planning has been put into this event and it is very poignant that their first stop was to pay tribute at the memorial to Bray firefighters, Brian Murray and Mark O'Shaughnessy, with their last stop being at the 9/11 Memorial in Kinsale on September 11th.

"The comradery between our firefighters here in Wicklow and members of the New York Fire Department is evident by the numbers who have come out in force to support this event. Our firefighters are the people we call when something goes wrong, and they keep our communities safe. The same can be said for the work being carried out by the charities benefiting from this event, Aoibheann's Pink Tie and Friends of Firefighters



Jennifer Whitmore TD with Firefighter Josh Barrington and Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer Sinead Sweeney.

New York, who both offer support and help to families," added Deputy Whitmore.

"I want to thank and congratulate the National Retained Firefighters Association of Ireland and the New York Fire Department on all their hard work organising this event together and I wish all of our cycling fire-

fighters best of luck for the rest of their journey," concluded Jennifer Whitmore.

Cllr Tom Fortune said "It was an honour to welcome members of FDNY to Greystones fire station on Monday. They were joined by cyclists from Donegal and around Wicklow including two firemen from Greystones.

Their journey took them down the east coast of Wicklow. They were seeing Wicklow at its best with the beautiful sunshine we had on the day.

"Thanks to everyone that made the day very special especially the Greystones firemen and the children from the local schools."



Cllr Tom Fortune with the firefighters at Greystones Fire Station.

Fundraising champion praises hospice support

A Wicklow woman who has been hosting coffee mornings for Hospice for the last 25 years, has praised the 'incredible' level of support they deliver to patients.

Anne Newton raises an average of €1,000 every year by inviting relatives and friends to her rural home, 6km from Ashford. She embraces the annual Bewley's Big Coffee Morning for Hospice as her way of helping to support patients receiving end-of-life care at Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services Wicklow Hospice.

This longstanding and much-loved national event, coordinated by Together for Hospice, takes place on 26th September.

"I hadn't visited anyone in a Hospice, but then I visited Our Lady's last year and it was amazing, I immediately felt relaxed and I felt this wonderful atmosphere envelop me, it was incredible.

"You are treated as someone who is living rather than someone who is dying. It was so heartwarming, so calm, there was no hustle and bustle. That made me more determined than ever to continue these fundraising events."

Anne's initial fundraiser was sparked when she heard a radio ad asking people to support Hospice coffee mornings.

"My uncle had died of cancer a few years before and he didn't get the chance to be cared for in a Hospice," said the mum-of-two.

"Every family has to deal with cancer, I don't believe there's a family that hasn't been hit by it. From small beginnings, Anne managed to raise €1,100 in 2019, before Covid put the brakes on in-person gatherings. The advantage of having it in your

home is that you invite the people and you have control over how many come," she says.

"I used to do a huge amount of baking but for last few years, my local Dunnes Stores has very kindly been donating goods, which helps me enormously I've also

taken to buying fruit as not everyone wants to eat cake! I have also invited people along the road who have moved in and want to get to know other people, they really enjoy it. I drop leaflets into letterboxes and spread the word in different WhatsApp groups."

Anne even sends leftovers to her husband Stephen's colleagues at Birdwatch Ireland, who

also make a donation to the Hospice. Together for Hospice, The National Hospice Movement, represents 24 Hospice and specialist palliative healthcare providers supporting patients and their families across Ireland.

Funds raised locally stay local and go directly to each local Hospice service to innovate, build new facilities, develop new services and deliver

quality improvements and extra benefits for their patients and their family members.

Register to host a coffee morning on Thursday, September 26 - or on a date that suits you - at hospicecoffeemorning.ie or call 0818 995 996. If you cannot host or attend a coffee morning, you can make a donation at hospicecoffeemorning.ie/donate



Anne Newton raises an average of €1,000 every year by inviting relatives and friends to her home near Ashford.



The recent Emergency Services on Bray Seafront was a huge success on Bray. Gardai stated "A big Thank You to our partners and local Emergency Services that came and set up a stand and did demonstrations throughout the day."

They were: Greystones Coast Guard, Bray Fire Brigade, Order of Malta, Bray 1st Responders, RNLI, Poseidon Life Saving Club, RNLI, Regional Support Unit & Water Unit in An Garda Síochana & well as local Community Garda, Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue, Bray Lions Club - message in a bottle initiative, and Desi O'Toole who launched his updated pamphlet on local services and where to turn to.

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Council offering a bulky waste day as part of anti-dumping initiative

Wicklow County Council is pleased to offer householders an opportunity to dispose of their bulky waste. These items such as sofas, tables, and bed bases can be difficult for people to dispose of due to their size, and lack of facilities that accept bulky waste here in County Wicklow. This initiative is part of a wider Anti-Dumping initiative by Wicklow County Council, which includes awareness raising initiatives, clean-up projects and the installation of CCTV at various locations affected by illegal dumping.

On Saturday, September 28th at County Buildings, Wicklow Town, Mulligan Dismantling & Salvage Ltd will be available to assist householders with this service. The Council anticipates that this service will be well received by the residents of Co. Wicklow.

In support of this Bulky Waste Day Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Paul O'Brien said "It is great to see this service being

offered. Bulky waste such as bed bases and sofas are frequently disposed of by burning in illegal, polluting bonfires. Also the items frequently end up in the hands of illegal, unauthorised waste collectors.

Emer O'Gorman stated that she was confident that this initiative will be well received by members of the public and stated that: "it will provide an excellent opportunity to eliminate a waste stream that can

frequently end up fly tipped in our rural environment impacting on our wildlife, visual amenity and upland recreational sites. Mulligan's was chosen due to their excellent experience in dealing with bulky waste and their nearby location. It can be added that the bulky waste will not go to landfill but instead as part of the circular economy, the waste stream will go to their authorised facility for further resource recovery.

"The following items such as indoor and outdoor furniture suites, bed bases and carpets will be accepted. A range of items such as plastics, mattresses, black bin bags and WEEE goods will strictly not be accepted.

"For those who are unable to avail of this service we ask that only waste collectors who have a permit are used. Information about permitted waste collectors can be found on the National Waste Collection Permit Office or on the Recycling & Waste Management section of our website."

ITEMS ACCEPTED:

- Furniture, outdoor & indoor
- Bed bases & headboards
- Carpets
- Bathroom suites
- Bicycles, trikes

THE FOLLOWING WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED:

- WEEE
- Plastics
- Items that can otherwise be recycled at Civic amenity sites
- Hazardous Waste
- Black rubbish bags of any kind
- Construction Waste
- Agricultural equipment

Free household hazardous waste collection day in Wicklow

Got Household Hazardous Waste? People in Wicklow Can Dispose of It Safely and For Free! The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices and Wicklow County Council have teamed up to host a FREE Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day in Wicklow on September 21st.

A recent survey found that over 50% of people in Ireland are concerned about handling hazardous household materials.

Funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices and Wicklow County Council are teaming up to host a FREE Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Saturday, September 21st, from 10:00am to 2:00pm at Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Whitegates, Wicklow Town, A67 FW96.

That's right, you can finally say goodbye to those potentially harmful products taking up space under your sink and in your shed. Some of the most common household hazardous products include oil-based paints, bleach, herbicides, and aerosols. The collection day will accept household items that contain potentially harmful components.

Commenting on the event, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr Paul O'Brien said, "It's really important that hazardous products are not placed in the general waste bin. This event allows all those living within the county to dispose of such waste in a safe and controlled environment. We encourage as many people to make use of the collection where possible."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council stated, "We were delighted to be able to team up with the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices to arrange this collection day. We ask everyone to make note of which items can be disposed of, and remind them only household hazardous waste can be accepted on the day."

"Mishandled hazardous waste can be dangerous for our environment and our health," says Carol Sweetnam of the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices. "This event is all about making it easy for householders to do the right thing and dispose of these materials safely."

Don't miss this chance to properly dispose of your household hazardous waste for FREE! Just remember to bring items in their original containers with legible original labels. For a complete list of accepted materials, visit www.mywaste.ie.

Please ONLY bring the following items

- * Household Chemicals: Disinfectants, detergents, bleach, oven cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners, and other potent cleaning agents.
- * Personal Care Products: Nail polish, nail polish remover, aerosols, and other chemical-based cosmetic products.
- * Garden Chemicals: Pesticides, herbicides, and other chemical treatments used in lawn and garden care.
- * Paints: Leftover paint with a hazardous waste symbol. Please note water-based paint is not hazardous. Let it harden and dispose of it in your general waste bin.
- * Solvents: varnishes, thinners, strippers, inks, glues, resins, and other solvent-based products.
- * Automotive Products: Used motor oil, petrol, diesel, antifreeze, surface polish, and other automotive fluids.

Important Reminders

- * This collection is for household hazardous waste only. Commercial/farm waste CANNOT be accepted.
- * Medicines and gas canisters will not be accepted.
- * There's a 10 can/tub limit per person for leftover paint.
- * Please plan your visit accordingly, as materials cannot be left outside of the collection hours 10am - 2pm on Saturday, September 21st.



Fred and Shana Rountree at the recent Newcastle Parish Summer Festival.

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Taoiseach visits Temple Carrig School for Amgen Biotech Experience

The Amgen Biotech Experience (ABE), a global initiative dedicated to advancing biotechnology education, has reached an incredible milestone: one million secondary school students worldwide. To celebrate this achievement, a special event, attended by Taoiseach Simon Harris and Bob Bradway, Amgen CEO, took place at Temple Carrig School in Greystones, one of the leading schools involved in the program in Ireland.

Since its introduction in 2014, ABE has empowered over 23,700 students and trained more than 215 science teachers across 175 secondary schools in Ireland. Globally, the program has now reached over one million students across 16 countries, helping to bring biotechnology out of university labs and into classrooms. Taoiseach Simon Harris said last Tuesday: "It is a pleasure to be in Temple Carrig School today to celebrate the success of the Amgen Biotech Experience in Irish schools. For ten years, students right across

the country have been introduced to the excitement of scientific discovery thanks to this excellent initiative. Today we are recognising the milestone of over one million students impacted globally by the programme and over 23,000 students in Ireland. The importance of this experience to students cannot be understated, with many students getting their first taste of biotech from the Amgen Biotech Experience. "I am delighted to be joined with Amgen CEO Bob Bradway and Chair of the Amgen Foundation Emily Razaqi here in Wicklow today. Their dedication and generosity has enriched the scientific experience for thousands of our students and I want to pay tribute to them for that."

Addressing students at the event Bob Bradway, Amgen CEO encouraged them to seize the opportunity:



Temple Carrig students at the Amgen experience.

"Remember, every great scientist started somewhere - often in a school just like this one, with a teacher just like your own Dr Cathcart and with a curiosity about how things work."

Through ABE, students in Ireland and across the globe are gaining hands-on experience with professional-grade scientific equipment. The program offers practical lessons in DNA analysis, gel electrophoresis and genetic engineering, helping students connect classroom theory to real-world scientific challenges.

Prof. Walter Kolch, Director Systems Biology Ireland, UCD said, "It is wonderful to see the enthusiasm young people have for science if it is presented to them in an interesting way. We are very happy to be part of the ABE programme and have enjoyed seeing the researchers and teachers get as much out of it as the students."

Closing the event, Emily Razaqi, Chair of the Amgen Foundation said, "We are dedicated to unlocking the potential of students around the world

through our science education programs, because everyone needs science and science needs everyone. By giving students the chance to perform advanced experiments and work with cutting-edge technology, we're helping them see the potential of biotechnology and its role in solving real-world problems."

As part of the celebration, four teachers in Ireland, including Dr Cathcart of Temple Carrig school, will share a bursary of €20,000 to help advance science education in their schools through the ABE program. These include training for teachers ahead of the new Leaving Cert biology specification in 2025/2026 and the introduction of ABE for deaf and hard of hearing students.

The Greystones event was part of a worldwide celebration of ABE's milestone, recognising the program's influence on students and teachers in 16 countries. In Ireland, ABE is delivered in partnership with Systems Biology Ireland (SBI) and the UCD Conway Institute, aligning with the new Irish Leav-

ing Certificate Biology syllabus, which now includes biotechnology components.

Temple Carrig School has been a key participant in the program, with its science teacher, Dr Declan Cathcart, leading the way in introducing advanced biotechnology experiments to students.



Catherine O'Shea of Temple Carrig School pictured at the Amgen Bitech Experience.

Whitmore calls for Centralised Application System for Greystones schools for 2025

Social Democrats TD for Wicklow, Jennifer Whitmore, has written to the Minister for Education urging her to consider Greystones as one of the 'high-pressure' areas that a new proposed centralised school entry plan will be trialled for the 2025 school year.

"I welcome the news that the Minister for Education and her department are planning to trial a new centralised admissions process for secondary schools in some high-pressure areas for the 2025 school year. It is encouraging that the department have recognised that a centralised school entry plan like this is needed in order to avoid the chaos that we saw in relation to secondary school places in Greystones this year," commented Deputy Whitmore.

"I have written to the Minister for Education asking for an update on how plans for this proposed trial are progressing and urging the Department of Education to consider including Greystones as one of the areas that this new process will be trialled," added Ms Whitmore.

"We cannot see a repeat of this year's school places crisis in Greystones again next year. The stress and worry that so many families and children

went through over the lack of secondary school places is unacceptable. Some children only received their school places a week before the school term started, after a summer of not knowing if they'd be able to start secondary school with the rest of their friends," explained Ms Whitmore, who is the Social Democrats spokesperson for Children.

"The schools in Greystones worked tirelessly last year to resolve the shortfall in school places and now it is time for the Department of Education to step up and find a solution to this annual problem and chaos surrounding secondary school applications. My office has already been contacted by local parents who are concerned about the 2025 enrolment process, and I believe that the inclusion of Greystones in this centralised school entry plan could help with their concerns. I will continue to work with and support parents and our local schools on this and other matters," concluded Deputy Whitmore.



Bob Bradway, CEO, AMGEN and An Taoiseach Simon Harris are pictured with Liam Goff (17) of Temple Carrig School Greystones as the Amgen Biotech Experience (ABE) celebrates reaching One Million Students Worldwide at a Special Event in Greystones.



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Bray, the perfect blend of coastal charm, modern living and education excellence

The cost of purchasing a home in the City Centre is far beyond the means of most. On the other hand, Bray, the coastal town in County Wicklow situated just 20 km south of Dublin city centre on the east coast, is the perfect location to buy a home. Property is more affordable, it has a safe and welcoming community, great facilities and top-class educational facilities where students can grow academically and socially.

Bray, County Wicklow, is a fantastic location for education due to several factors that enhance both learning and quality of life for students and families:

1. Proximity to Dublin

Bray is just a short distance from Dublin, giving students access to some of Ireland's leading universities, such as Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin (UCD), and Dublin City University (DCU). This proximity allows for convenient commuting while living in a quieter, coastal town.

2. Range of Educational Institutions

Bray is home to a variety of primary and secondary schools, both public and private, known for their high standards. Schools like St. Gerard's, Loreto Secondary School, and Presentation College have strong reputations for academic excellence and extracurricular activities.

3. Further & Higher Education

Bray offers numerous opportunities for lifelong learning and adult education. Bray Institute of

Further Education (BIFE) provides a wide range of courses in business, art, design, technology, and more. It is one of the largest further & higher education colleges in Ireland, catering to diverse learning needs. BIFE has always maintained a strong relationship with local industry and has identified emerging demands in key areas nationally. They have met these ever-increasing and challenging demands from a diverse group of stakeholders by re-developing part of their institute over the past few

years. Now, the huge range of courses available at BIFE offers learners fabulous opportunities, for those not only looking for additional skills or hoping to go directly into employment but also as an alternative route to a college course in a university or institute of technology in Ireland or abroad. After two years of study at BIFE, Learners can progress to the 3rd year of honours degree programmes in areas such as Culinary Arts, Media, Performing Arts and Accounting Technician to

mention a few.

4. Scenic and Healthy Environment

The coastal setting of Bray provides a calm and beautiful environment, which contributes positively to students' well-being. The picturesque seaford, hiking trails like the Bray Head, and the nearby Wicklow Mountains create a peaceful backdrop for study and outdoor activities.

5. Cultural and Sporting Opportunities

Bray offers various cultural amenities, including the Mermaid Arts



Centre, which supports artistic expression and learning. Students also have access to various sporting clubs, including rugby, soccer, tennis, and water sports, which contribute to a well-rounded education.

6. Access to Technology and Innovation

With its close ties to Dublin, Bray benefits

from the city's status as a tech hub. This connection can lead to internships, work placements, and exposure to cutting-edge research and development, especially for students interested in fields like IT, engineering, and entrepreneurship.

7. Transport Links

Bray's excellent transport

links via bus, train (DART), and motorway make commuting to educational institutions in Dublin and surrounding areas easy and efficient. All these factors make Bray an excellent place for both traditional schooling and continuous education, combining quality institutions with a high quality of life.

New 12-classroom school building in Kilcoole

A new 12-classroom school building has been approved to go to construction by the Department of Education in Kilcoole. Four class extensions to the existing St Anthony's Building have been approved. The new build will be a "massive uplift and improvement" to the school's capacity and to families across the area, An Taoiseach Simon Harris has said.

The Taoiseach said: "I am thrilled to announce Kilcoole Primary School has had their new 12-classroom new build approved to go to construction. Alongside this construction there will be 4 class extensions to the existing St Anthony's

Building. This development will be massive improvement on the current capacity and will no doubt be welcomed by parents of children in the school.

"As Taoiseach I have been working hard to deliver for families and for

schools across the country. Our children need state of the art, upgraded and spacious school facilities. Wicklow has long dealt with school places shortages but I am determined to see an end to school shortages in the county.

"Announcements like

these are a huge relief to hundreds of families in the area and show that this Government is taking action when it comes to education. It is so important that all schools in County Wicklow are able to provide for all children and cater for each of their needs.

"As a TD for Wicklow I have always placed a priority on education and on school builds. Speaking to parents across the County that we have so

much more to do for schools, it's clear there is so much more to be done to improve our educational facilities and we are making significant progress in this area.

"As a local TD I will continue to work with schools and principals to

represent their needs in Government and provide for extra capacity to meet Wicklow's growing population.

Minister Stephen Donnelly also welcomed the news, saying "Kilcoole, just like many other parts of Wicklow, is a

growing community and this will ensure that we have the primary education capacity needed in Kilcoole over the coming years. I've worked hard to press the Department of Education to deliver on this and other school projects in Wicklow.

"This is an important step in the process of delivering school places for our children, and I will continue to ensure that we can now get all the necessary work complete and get the diggers and boots on the ground to deliver this school project."

'Some Wicklow class sizes are still too big'

Jennifer Whitmore TD has warned that although primary school class sizes do appear to be in a downward trend nationally, there are still many classes across Wicklow with 30 or more children in them.

Based on data from the National School Annual Census compiled by the Department of Education, almost a third of the 82 Wicklow schools included in the census, had classes of 30 or more students. Under Department of Education guidelines these classes are considered to be oversized.

"Nationally we do seem to be seeing an overall reduction in primary school class sizes, but we still have a long way to go in comparison to other European Union member states who average between 18 and 23 children per a class," commented Deputy Whitmore, who is the Social Democrats spokesperson for Children.

"Almost a third of our primary schools in Wicklow have classes where there are over 30 children. Some of these classes have 34 children in them, 11 pupils more than the current rate of 23 children per a teacher used by the

Department to allocate teaching positions to schools.

"Out of 82 Wicklow Primary schools only 14 schools had classes where their largest class size was 23 students or less. Over 80% of the schools had classes of 25 or more children, far exceeding the recommended international best-practice guideline of 20.

"These larger class sizes impact children, teachers, SNAs and school staff and need to be addressed. Circumstances such as the teacher shortage, combined with an increase in demand for school places and the lack of permanent classroom accommodation for some schools are exasperating the situation and making it almost impossible for schools to reduce class sizes.

"In some schools we are seeing class sizes increase as schools are having to take drastic actions to deal with the current teacher shortage. I have been contacted by con-



Jennifer Whitmore TD.

cerned parents from one Wicklow school where class groups have had to be combined to form larger 4th and 5th classes due to a lack of teachers. The Department of Education needs to be proactive and offer greater supports for schools struggling to fill teaching positions and urgently address issues with the procurement and building of permanent classroom accommodation."

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Progress made in establishment of Neuro-Rehabilitation Centre in Bray

Jennifer Whitmore TD has welcomed news from the HSE that progress is being made in the establishment of the long-awaited Neuro Rehabilitation Centre in Bray. Deputy Whitmore has received confirmation from the HSE that positions for this team will be advertised this month with the recruitment process taking place over the autumn and they hope to have established this Community Neuro Rehabilitation Team in early 2025.

"This is a very welcome and encouraging development for the families and patients who have been waiting so long for the establishment of this community-based service. We now have a clear timeline with a date set for the establishment of a Community Neuro Rehabilitation Team in Bray, which will service the needs of East Wicklow

and South Dublin," commented Deputy Whitmore.

Recruitment for the planned CH06 (East Wicklow/South Dublin) Neuro Rehabilitation team had been signed off on in May 2023 but was subsequently delayed by the HSE hiring freeze. Following the end of this hiring freeze in July, Deputy Whitmore wrote to the HSE asking for an

update on the status of the recruitment process. In a response from the HSE it was confirmed that following a consultation process with unions on these new development roles, recruitment for the team should commence in September.

"I would like to commend the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) on their tireless campaigning to see the estab-

lishment of community rehabilitation teams for neurological patients in Wicklow and across the country. Their determination to ensure that this essential community healthcare service is available to patients will allow hundreds of people across Wicklow to access rehabilitation services following stroke and brain injuries as well as Parkinson's patients and

others in need of physical or speech therapy," added Deputy Whitmore.

"I will continue to closely follow the progress being made on the establishment of the Community Neuro Rehabilitation Team in Bray and ask for regular updates on the early 2025 opening date. Ensuring that this team are in place as soon as possible needs to be a priority for the

HSE so that neurological patients in Wicklow can receive the care and treatment that they need within their community.

"I will also continue to advocate for the speedy establishment of a team for West Wicklow to ensure that this service is available for all who need it across Wicklow. This is a key priority of mine," concluded Deputy Whitmore.



Jennifer Whitmore TD.



Senator Pat Casey.

Casey welcomes Govt crackdown on disposable vapes

Fianna Fáil Senator Pat Casey has welcomed proposals brought to Cabinet by his party colleague Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly that would ban the sale of disposable vapes.

The proposals would also restrict the sale of flavoured vapes, which often appeal to children, as well as ban point-of-sale advertising displays in shops other than specialised outlets that only sell vapes.

Senator Casey said: "Disposable vapes are a blight on our environment. They are hazardous if not recycled properly and they can be seen littered across the country, in all of our communities, in

even the most remote locations.

"It is well documented that they have a detrimental impact on the climate and our biodiversity as the lithium batteries within these vapes are very toxic form of litter and could be releasing toxic compounds into the environment.

"For both environmental and public health reasons, ban-

ning disposable vapes is a hugely important step that will protect younger people in particular, who often impulse by them in shops and experiment with them."

Senator Casey said it is welcome that the legislation will tackle advertising displays, packaging and flavours, as these are targeted at younger people.

He said: "The bright colours and imagery used to promote flavoured vapes are used to attract young people into impulse purchases. By introducing plain packaging for vapes we will reduce their appeal to youth and non-users, and by banning point of sale advertising displays we will reduce 'gateway' vaping among young people.

"The efforts of Minister Donnelly to tackle the scourge of youth vaping must be applauded. My party colleagues and I in Fianna Fáil recognise that nicotine is a highly addictive drug, and we are acting to make these products less accessible to our young people and to remove them from their everyday lives."

'Govt needs to address crisis in public dentistry as a priority'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has revealed that information provided to him by Frances O'Callaghan, the Chief Dental Surgeon, reveals that the number of dental practices in the East Wicklow area who are currently signed up to the dental treatment services scheme (DTSS) now stands at a mere nine. He described public dentistry as being in a state of crisis and called on the government to make it a priority.

Deputy Brady said: "Despite the fact that I have called repeatedly for this issue to be addressed here in Wicklow, it appears that my appeals are falling on deaf ears. There are three government TDs in Wicklow. Including the Taoiseach and the Minister for Health. Yet they are content to completely ignore the running down of the DTSS.

"Such is the government's indifference on the issue, the question needs to be asked as to whether they are intent on running down the service, and forcing a private dental system on patients, many of whom would be denied access to dental services due to the prohibitive cost

of such measures. The Irish Dental Association is on record as saying that the current DTSS does not allow them to provide the level of service that their patients need.

"According to reports there are now at least 252 fewer dentists signed up to the scheme that there was last year. This is a trend which we can anticipate will continue, as the government continues to ignore the problem. Across Wicklow patients are struggling to get appointments, are being forced to travel further, or are forced to postpone visits to dentists.

"Under the current rules that govern the DTSS, patients are allowed a limited level of treatment to

save teeth, but the scheme allows for an unlimited number of tooth extractions. These rules are preventing dentists from offering the level of treatment which they want to, and their patients need.

"This is completely unacceptable. It places unnecessary and undue hardship on the most vulnerable in our society. There are many families and workers who are being forced into debt to ensure that they and their families receive the dental treatment they need privately, more often than not at enormous cost.

"Regular dental care is also important in the identification and diagnosis of mouth cancers. If patients are unable to afford to

attend dentists as a result of the government's failure, this could also lead to life threatening health issues arising and being left untreated. Simon Harris and Stephen Donnelly cannot be allowed to continue to ignore this situation. Not only as it impacts on Wicklow, but it is a statewide issue that is now at crisis level.

"The government needs to act immediately to address this issue, particularly at a time when they are leaking left right and centre about how they are going to spend billions in order to buy the next election. They need to prioritise the needs of people above their own ambitions."

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Susan Ferguson, Siobhan Condon, Eileen Earls, Cllr Paul O'Brien (Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council), Mary Heaslip and Ann Houston at the Wicklow Cancer Support 20th anniversary celebration in Wicklow Golf Club.

€1.4m allocated to Tiglin

Aftercare programme and residential facilities launched

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has allocated €1.4m to Tiglin and has also officially launched Tiglin's aftercare programme and residential facilities at Coolnagreina for women in addition.

Minister Donnelly, a long time supporter of Tiglin's addiction services, has today launched the next phase of services for women in addiction. The €1.4m allocated will lead to a new 12-bed facility for women who have completed Tiglin's programme.

The same facility includes a unique aftercare service and therapeutic programme which Minister Donnelly allocated annual funding to from 2022. This service provides youth workers and staff, including a children's therapist and

family psychotherapist. Minister Donnelly spent the morning of Friday 6th September with service users, staff and volunteers. Speaking at the launch he said: "The team at Tiglin deserve huge credit and our on-going support for

the work they do. This latest innovation is focused at supporting women in addiction and in recovery. The 12-bedded unit will make a huge difference. The added benefit of the aftercare programme is what's really making this a success for service users and their families.

"The people I meet coming through Tiglin's services are some of the strongest women and men I've ever met. The Tiglin team, the staff and volunteers, are some of the best people I've ever met. It's an honour to be able to provide State support for what they do.

"I have no doubt that the Tiglin team will continue to innovate, continue to provide new and important supports for those who need them and I wish them the very best with their endeavours."

Currently, Tiglin boasts a youth café, spaces for community use such as drama groups, and a bakery that services the needs of the café and brings training and employment opportunities for residents. Tiglin is also currently providing accommodation for many Ukrainian refugees.



Minister Donnelly with Tiglin founder Aubrey McCarthy and CEO Phil Thompson.



Minister Donnelly pictured with Tiglin staff.

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Native Irish Honey Bees defy the weather



The Annual Ashford & District Beekeepers' association Honey Festival in 2019. This year's festival takes place on 21st September.

The fact that our bees have produced some delicious honey this year, despite the Irish 'summer' weather mix of sunshine, cold, mist and rain, is testament to why conservation of our native Irish honey bee, *Apis Mellifera Mellifera* (AMM) is so important.

Like us, they can survive whatever the weather throws at us and thrive in the sunshine when it comes. They have had thousands of years to build up resistance after all! Since the ice age, they have acclimatised to our particularly changeable, oceanic climate.

Our native black honey bees can conserve honey for their own use in harsh weather and when the sun does shine they forage madly to collect all the nectar necessary to produce surplus quantities of honey for us to enjoy. They have been particularly active on the ling heather this August, when for 3 weeks they have foraged to bring in beautiful heather honey.

Every September, our

Beekeepers bring their locally harvested honey for you to taste and buy at this popular annual community event. Whilst the theme is our bees and their delicious honey, there is something for all the family to enjoy from tots to teens, parents and grandparents. From 11 am to 4 pm, the grounds will be buzzing with activity. See the bees close at hand in the observation hives, and chat to our beekeepers who are always happy to answer any questions you may have. We will have a stand with information for those who are aspiring beekeepers and how you can make a start.

There are plants and flowers for sale, organic produce, handmade soaps

and oils, candles, wood craft and bee supplies. Our stallholders have been coming every year and by all accounts they enjoy the day as much as we do! The children love our face painting, the quiz hunt, the interactive bee rhyme session, which are all free events. Enjoy great refreshments and tray bakes, barista coffee, burgers and strawberries and ice cream.

Our keynote speaker in this, the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Association, is Dr Abigail Ruth Freeman, Director of Science Foundation Ireland, and a regular contributor to Pat Kenny's Newstalk radio show. The Wicklow Heritage Barn Owl project will be represented, so for

anyone who loves wildlife, it is an event not to be missed. Schools across Wicklow are taking part in the Honey Festival's Art & Poetry competition and one of the highlights of the festival is the display of the wonderful artwork. Winners of each category are announced in the afternoon on 21st September, which causes great excitement amongst the talented young entrants.

The Heritage centre and parish grounds in Ashford will be transformed into a hive of activity on 21st September 2024 for the Annual Ashford & District Beekeepers' association Honey Festival. Entrance for all is free, doors open at 11.00 until 4.00.

Local businesses get a chance to shine at Ploughing 2024

Three of Wicklow's best small businesses will get a chance to exhibit their business to almost 300,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska, County Laois from the 17th - 19th September, as part of the Local Enterprise Village.

JTM Energy, Le Paysan and Olanmor who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Wicklow, are all attending this year's National Ploughing Championships.

The Local Enterprise Village, an initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices, will house over 30 small businesses and will be located at the heart of this year's National Ploughing Championships.

With some of the biggest companies in Ireland taking up residence at the Ploughing every

year, the Local Enterprise Village continues to be a popular destination on the site for those looking to pick up something unique to bring home from some of the best small businesses in Ireland.

A selection of businesses from across the country helped launch the Local Enterprise Village for 2024 at Airfield Estate in Dublin. These included Leah Cleary of Fore Distillery (supported by LEO Westmeath), Dublin fashion designer Jennifer Rothwell (supported by

LEO Dublin City), Anouk O'Connell of natural wool company Olanmor (supported by LEO Wicklow), Aymar Gourdet of Le Skinny Chef (supported by LEO Laois), Joanne Doyle of Enchanted Castle Melts (supported by LEO Carlow), Aoife Potie of Nuasan (supported by LEO Galway) and Mildred Tang of canvas tote company Chic Tote (supported by LEO Dun Laoghaire Rathdown).

Head of Enterprise at LEO Wicklow, Vibeke Delahunt commented

"This is an opportunity like no other for a small business in Ireland. The chance to bring their ideas and products to almost 300,000 potential customers is a showcase like no other. The Local Enterprise Village has become one of those areas everyone wants to drop into to find their local business and see what they can pick up."

"There is a huge variety of businesses highlighting the depth of sectors that the Local Enterprise Offices support from manufacturing to food and beverage, to software solutions. Whatever you are interested in, there is something for everyone at the Local Enterprise Village."

Some of the clients involved this year cover areas such as kids clothing and games, agtech products, luxury bathing and skincare products, artisan food and drink producers, sustainable clothing and beauty products and range of innovative products from Ireland's best small businesses.

Cllr. Paul O'Brien, Cathaoirleach Wicklow County Council said, "The Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships are a fantastic showcase of superb small businesses supported by their Local Enterprise Offices. It is a great opportunity for three small Wicklow



Anouk O'Connell from Olanmor. Photo by Frame It Productions.

business to exhibit in front of up to 300,000 people."

Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman commented, "This is a great opportunity for three Wicklow businesses to show themselves to the public. These three businesses showcase the variety of small business in Wicklow, ranging from energy to food and craft. We wish them every success for the event."

Kildare National Ploughing Association Director John Dunne said "It is wonderful to see so many diverse and impressive businesses partaking in this year's 'Local Enterprise Village' at the National Ploughing Championships. This is an ideal and unique opportunity for these companies to showcase their products & wares to over 250,000 visitors that Ploughing attracts."

The Local Enterprise Village is just one of a number of initiatives that the Local Enterprise Offices run, to foster

entrepreneurship across the country. Others include Local Enterprise Week, the National Enterprise Awards, the Student Enterprise Programme, National Women's Enterprise Day and Local Enterprise Showcase. The Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities are funded by the Government of Ireland through Enterprise Ireland.

Established in 2014, the Local Enterprise Offices are the essential resource for any entrepreneur looking to start a business or any small business that is looking for support or advice to help them grow. Since their inception ten years ago, the Local Enterprise Offices have helped create over 70,000 jobs across the country. The LEOs work with thousands of client companies across Ireland in a diverse range of sectors offering mentoring, training, expert advice and financial support to small businesses.

For more information see www.LocalEnterprise.ie.



Shaun McNamara from JTM Energy. Photo by Frame It Productions.



Thierry Peurois from Le Paysan. Photo by Frame It Productions.

Culture Night returns to Wicklow

A national moment celebrating culture, creativity and the arts, Culture Night on Friday 20th September seeks to actively promote the rich and varied culture treasured and nurtured in people's lives.

Thanks to the continued support of the Arts Council, Creative Places and Creative Ireland, Wicklow County Arts Office have commissioned, collaborated, and supported an exciting and diverse programme of free events and activities purposefully selected to open up pathways to creativity in 14 locations across County Wicklow.

Visit Baltinglass on Culture Night for a fun-filled night of music and creativity. Enjoy a special concert in Stratford Lodge featuring headliner **Roisín O.**, along with local musicians and singers including **Sam Ali, Amy Barret, Taylor Haze** and **Kendal Moody**.

An **Artisan Craft Market** will take place in Germaine's Inn in Baltinglass to spotlight artists and crafts people from across the county. Incorporating science and technology into the programme; **Virtual Reality Workshops** will take place for those aged 12 - 18 in Fatima Hall. Also in Fatima Hall, local creatives **Andrew Mooney** and **Diarmuid MacDiarmada** will host **Secret Sonic**

Cinematheque: Silent films, live contemporary scores.

The **Mermaid Arts Centre** in Bray will celebrate the Holy Show arts magazine launch with poet **Jane Clarke** and photographer **David Stephen** capturing the sights and sounds of the Bray promenade at Bray bandstand. **RTE Arena** will also carry out a special live broadcast in the Mermaid Arts Centre, and the night will be rounded out with an exhibition opening of **Harold Offeh's Leisure Seekers** multi-media installation.

In Arklow, the 'Culture Crawl' is back. Participants follow a purposefully curated trail of local cultural hot spots, with regular stop-offs along the way to enjoy some of the amazing local talent featuring a range of artists and creatives.

Bray Jazz Festival returns to Rathdrum's St. Saviour's Church to host a double bill programme with Belfast-based **Coras Trio**, and Irish folk and bluegrass band **Nava**.

The Wicklow Library Services have curated a

programme of performances at Arklow, Ballywaltrim, Blessington, Carnew, Dunlavin, Enniskerry, Rathdrum, Tinahely and Wicklow Town Libraries including:

Arklow Library - Artist **Conor Walton's Arklow Portrait Marathon** from 10am to 10pm. Book your 10 minute slot. Portraits will be showcased in the library exhibition and participants will receive their portrait on completion.

Tinahely Library - Writer **Sylvia Cullen** will give a public reading of some of her work and will be accompanied by contributors to *The Book of Tomnafinnoge*, which she edited in 2021.

Greystones Library - **Irish PEN/PEN na hEireann** presents international poetry readings from poets **Sean Borodale, Jane Clarke** and **Viviana Fiorentino**. **Poetry from the Edge** reflects on climate change, nature and how poetry and words can inspire change.

Wicklow Town Library - **The Only Ones** comprising local teenage duo **Denis**



Jenny Sherwin (Arts Officer, Wicklow County Council), Michael McNamara (A/Senior Executive Officer, Wicklow County Council), Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Paul O'Brien, Theresa O'Brien (Director of Services, Wicklow County Council), Camille Lynch (Culture Night Event Producer), Rachel Tyrrell of The Colour Club Arklow, George Jacob of Bray Jazz Festival and Juliet Tyrrell (front). Photo by Mick Kelly.

Morrissey and Ed Morrissey perform their original rock songs.

The Whale Theatre in Greystones will host **Sounds from the Burren** with artists, musicians, and singer-songwriters based in the

Burren area of Clare.

Commenting on the events, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr. Paul O'Brien said, "I am delighted to see that this year's Culture Night programme encompasses fourteen loca-

tions across County Wicklow and ensures local arts, creativity and citizens are represented."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Emer O'Gorman stated, "It's great to see another

vibrant programme in Baltinglass for the third year in a row. Creative Places has enabled the local community and the Wicklow County Arts Office to produce an innovative and engaging programme of events."

All events are free and advance booking is advised to avoid disappointment.

See the full Wicklow Culture Night programme at <https://culturenight.ie/location/wicklow/>

Don't miss The Wicklow Town Heritage Trail this Year

The weekly guided walk of the new Wicklow Town Heritage Trail continued on Saturday 14th September and continues on the following two Saturdays (21st and 28th), when it will conclude until Easter 2025.

There has been a guided Walk each Saturday morning since Easter. It has proven to be a growing attraction for tourists and locals with an increasing number of people who have recently moved to the town. Overall, over 500 people have taken part this year and have gained a great insight into the rich heritage and history of the town.

The organisers of the Heritage Trail have been thrilled with the growing popularity of the Heritage Trail and extend a warm welcome to all those interested in the history and heritage of the town to take

part in what is a very informative trail.

This walk commences from Fitzwilliam Square at 11am each Saturday morning and will take approximately 2 hours to complete, allowing participants to spend some time at each location.

The walk this week will focus mainly on the history and heritage around the town centre including:

- St. Patrick's Church - telling the history of its construction and its historical context.
- The ruins of the Franciscan Abbey.

- The story of Robert Halpin - his birthplace and his achievement in laying the first Trans-Atlantic cable.

On each storyboard around the town, there is a QR code which enables participants to watch a video on their phone, telling them the story of each key location. The actors featured on the videos are members of the local dramatic society, who gave their services free to this project.

For further information on the Wicklow Town Heritage Trail, visit www.wicklowtown.ie.



Participants on the Wicklow Town heritage trail.

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Robert Grace at Whale Theatre

Saturday 21st September, 8pm (doors 7pm). Tickets €26 and available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550.

Ireland's most popular musician on social media, Robert Grace, recently released his debut album 'Happy Sad Songs' via Columbia Germany. The Kilkenny singer-songwriter is a true innovator when it comes to compelling tracks and this album promises to be a musical journey like no other.

"Happy Sad Songs", as he loves to call them, have become his ultimate trademark, and gives listeners a glimpse into the depths of Grace's soul. Including previously released singles such as 'Euphoria', 'Fake Fine', 'Casper', 'Hate Me' and 'Not OK,' Robert addresses issues around mental health, presenting them in a surprisingly light way.

Speaking about the album Robert Grace says "What does Happy Sad Songs mean to me? Well, I've always described my songs as happy sad songs, because I love having happy music and then a sad story and mixing them both together. And I think it kind of hits everyone because those who are just

enjoying the music will think 'this is really good and really happy.' And then the people who like to dive into the lyrics will see the deeper message. So I (kind of) enjoy the kind of hidden aspect to it all."

Having kicked off his career at the height of the pandemic, he can already look back on an impressive track record.

With more than 3.2m million followers on TikTok, the singer-songwriter was the most viewed Irish music artist on TikTok in 2022 surpassing artists like Niall Horan and Dermot Kennedy and showcasing his growing influence in the music scene.

International breakthrough, 'Fake Fine', has gained over 30 million streams to date, and has since been certified Double Platinum in Ireland. Similarly, 'Not OK' garnered 1 million streams in its first week alone, while his latest single 'Euphoria'-a melodious tribute inspired by the acclaimed series of the same name after an intense binge-watching session - has seen big success on BBC Radio 1, as one of Clara Amfo's Hottest Records of the Week, as well as being Molly King's Future Bop.

The track's idea loosely revolves around Rue's struggles with addiction, and involved collaboration with friends Ryan Mack and Jake Richardson, with additional production contributions from Jackson Foote (David Guetta, Zara Larsson, Jennifer Lopez).

Robert Grace has supported shows for the likes of Picture This, Ryan Mack and Mother Mother. He has recently completed a headline tour in Ireland.



Robert Grace.



Mr. Jimmy

Film Club at Whale Theatre, Thursday 19th September, 8pm (doors 7pm). Tickets €12 and available at www.whaletheatre.ie

As anyone who has met the mighty Alan Adamson will tell you, there's something truly magical about undying hero worship. For Alan, it's Elvis. For Akio Sakurai, it's Jimmy Page, and 35 years after playing along to Led Zeppelin records in his bedroom, that teenage thrill remains very much the same for this Japanese guitarist.

His particular level of obsession extends to copying every single note of every Jimmy Page guitar solo ever recorded - live or in the studio - along with every single stitch of the man's onstage outfits, the same guitars, the same amps, the same stances. Channeling Jimmy Page is the man's life, his identity, and getting to play a 2-hour show in front of his one and only true rock god launches Akio from 20 years of playing Tokyo clubs to moving to L.A., where his American dream hits both heavenly highs and Spinal Tap lows.

It makes for a fascinating documentary, as our method guitar hero goes from

a man obsessed to a man possessed, stuck in a moment that's actually someone else's moment. Recreating the spontaneous is a thankless task, and even as success comes his way, we realise that Mr Jimmy might be stuck in Christmas Eve forever, his personal demons all in the meticulous attention to detail. A fable all about never giving up on your teenage dream, Mr Jimmy will hit a nerve in just about everyone who has, whilst possibly working as a cautionary tale for everyone who hasn't. The Whale and the Greystones Film Club are very proud to turn it up to 11 for the Irish premiere for this award-winning documentary.

Six Wicklow schools to join Arts Council Programme

Six local schools in Wicklow will join the Arts Council's new Creative Schools programme.

The schools are: Saint Francis National School, Delgany National School, Sacred Heart National School, Donard National School, St. Mary's and St. Gerard's National School, and Gaelcholaiste Na Mara

Speaking last week, the Taoiseach said "I am delighted to confirm that six local schools in County Wicklow will be joining the Arts Council's new Creative Schools programme. Under this programme, schools will each receive a €4,000 grant and will have access to working with a professional Creative Associate for two years, who will help support schools develop their own creative projects. Encouraging our young people and students to engage with the arts will greatly benefit their development throughout their education, and this programme seeks to foster creative thinking and exploration, skills which will stay with them for life. County Wicklow has long had a deep connection with the arts, with a huge array of incredible artists working across the county. Hopefully this programme will help to encourage some of Co. Wicklow's future artists, and I look forward to seeing the work of Co. Wicklow's students over the course of this programme."



Bebhinn Eilish and Yifei at the opening reception of 'This, That and the Other', an exhibition by Deirdre Maher Ridgway in Signal Arts Centre. Pic: Joe McQuillan.

Sounds from The Burren

Whale Theatre, Friday 20th September, 8pm (doors 7pm). Free Admission but pre booking is essential. www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550.

Artists, musicians and singer-songwriters based in the Burren area of Clare come together to share the vibrant and vivid heritage and creativity of this ancient and unique region in the intimate surroundings of the Whale Theatre.

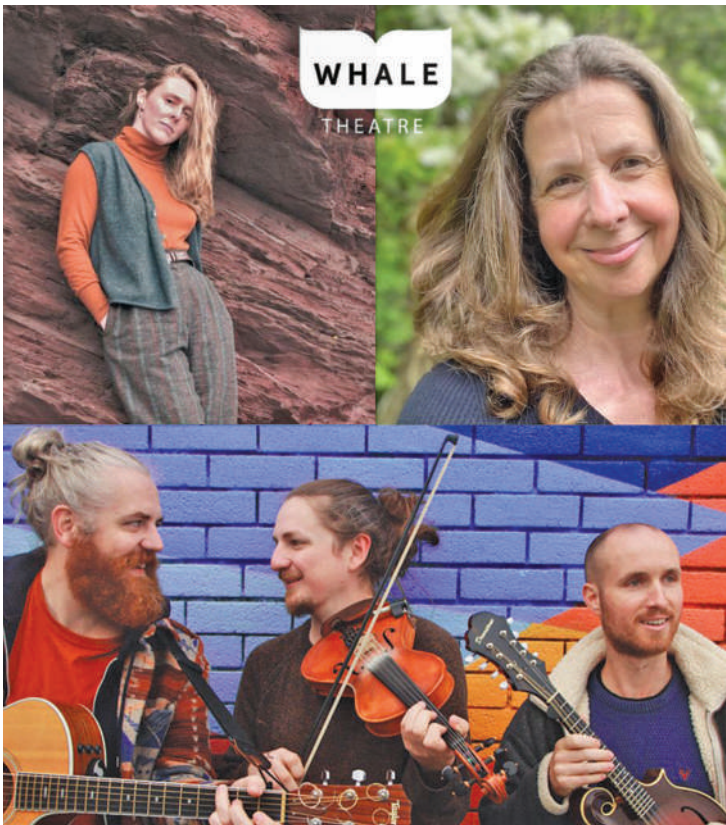
To open the evening we will be joined by environmental poet Grace Wells with musical accompaniment and visuals. Grace has published three books of poetry, and is currently Writer-in-Residence for Hometree Charity's Dinneen eco-arts project.

Next joining us will be Branwen Kavanagh, a musician and performance artist from the West of Ireland. Their work is imagination centric and is inspired by mythology and folklore from home and around

the world. They are a songwriter, a sculptor, puppeteer, a visual artist, writer of surreal visual plays, and a lively adventurer.

Rounding out the evening will be an energetic performance from MegaTrad, an innovative and exciting trio that bring high energy, improvisation and a new tribal face to Irish traditional music.

Pre-booking is essential, and tickets will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, via the Whale Theatre website.



Seckou Keita at Mermaid

Mermaid Arts Centre, Saturday 28th September, 8pm. €23



Seckou Keita

Seckou Keita is a renowned Kora (African Harp) virtuoso who stands as a luminary amongst African traditional musicians.

Hailing from Southern Senegal, his journey from a gifted child to a globally recognised musician has been nothing short of remarkable. Dubbed as "the Hendrix of the Kora", Seckou's innovative approach and exceptional skill constantly pushes the boundaries of what the instrument can achieve. With a discography boasting 14 critically-acclaimed albums cumulating over 25 million streams on Spotify alone, and a collection of prestigious awards, including multiple BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, Seckou Keita has left an indelible mark on the music scene.

His solo show is a mesmerising mix of captivating melodies, joyous rhythms, uplifting vocals and contemplative instrumentals. An elegant display of virtuosity, natural connection with the audience and joy that will undoubtedly draw the audience in and take their breath away.



Fungi: The Web of Life (Cert: G)

Mermaid Arts Centre, Friday 27th September, 8pm. Tickets: €10/8.

Duration: 41mins + 18mins recorded Q&A

Much of life on Earth is connected by a vast, hidden network that we are only just beginning to understand. Out of sight, between the world of plants and animals, another world exists-the kingdom of fungi. Featuring the author of the bestseller *Entangled Life*, Merlin Sheldrake and narrated by Bjork.

This event includes a short filmed Q&A held at the London premier with Merlin Sheldrake that provides insight into the filming of this incredible documentary

Directed by Gisela Kaufmann, Joseph Nizeti and Mike Slee. Book tickets through mermaidartscentre.ie or call Box Office on 01 272 4030.

The Wicklow Artists Salon

Curated by visual artist Joanna Kidney and writer Philip St John, the Wicklow Artists' Salon is a unique development in Irish culture: the only regular cross-arts forum where Irish creatives can meet to discuss matters of mutual interest, learn from each other and, hopefully, begin collaborations on exciting new work. The salon is funded by Wicklow Arts Office and the Arts Council of Ireland, and supported by Mermaid Arts Centre, The Courthouse Arts Centre, Killruddery House, Bray and Blessington Library.

Each salon features invited artists who open our discussion of themes such as Collaboration; Rituals and Routines, Talismans and Tools; Minding Yourself; and Creative Flow. Guest so far include Booker Prize winner, Paul Lynch; Irish representative at the Venice Biennale, Jesse Jones; theatremakers, Broken-talkers; dancer, Jessica Kennedy; musician, Ronan O'Snodaigh; and filmmaker Paddy Breathnach. (Full details of guests and them can be found here). Each salon opens out to a discussion with attendees

in a friendly, inclusive atmosphere. There is also a chance to mingle over tea and coffee.

In November there is another salon in Blessington Library, All professional artists are welcome...and the event is free (but artists must book! Details below).

Saturday 16th November 12.30-4pm.

Venue: Blessington Library

Theme: An Image, A Tune, A Poem.

Featuring: Helen Blake, visual artist; Jessica Traynor, poet;

Colm Mac Con Iomaire, musician; Theresa Nanigian, facilitator.

Three contemporary artists from varied disciplines share exciting recent work and explain how and why they created it.

For this special Saturday afternoon salon in Blessington Library, there will be a complimentary lunch and a subsidised artists bus to and from Mermaid, Bray. Booking details will be available from Mermaid soon - check back!



Music Network presents Nollaig Casey, Niall McCabe & Mike McGoldrick for an unforgettable night in Wicklow

2nd October, Coollattin House, 8pm. Tickets €20/18

Nollaig Casey fiddle/viola, Niall McCabe vocals/guitar, Mike McGoldrick flute/uilleann pipes/whistles

For September 2024, Music Network brings together three extraordinary artists. The incomparable Mike McGoldrick, a player whose virtuosity and creativity has seen him collaborate with everyone from Mary Chapin Carpenter to Mark Knopfler, will be joined by the exceptionally talented and widely acclaimed fiddle and viola player Nollaig Casey, and one of Ireland's rising stars of the folk world, guitarist and singer Niall McCabe. No doubt this trio will ignite creative sparks when they kick-start the Music Network Autumn season this September.

Nollaig Casey is one of Ireland's most gifted and versatile musicians with a distinctive sound and a unique, instantly recognisable playing style. Her musical CV includes work with Enya, Van Morrison, Sinead O'Connor, Nanci Griffith, Mary Black, Andy Irvine, The Indigo Girls, Spandau Ballet, Christy Moore, Liam O'Flynn, Sharon Shannon, her husband Arty McGlynn and sister, the innovative and influential harper Maire Ni Chathasaigh amongst a host of other recognisable names. Nollaig was also a member of the groundbreaking bands Coolfin and Planxty.

Born on Clare Island, Co. Mayo, Niall McCabe grew up in the family-run pub awash with strong musical influences from traditional Irish and folk to rock and soul. Niall possesses an effortless charm which captivates his audiences, and together with deft, intricate guitar-playing and distinct

vocals is earning him a growing and loyal fan-base, who are discovering his music as he tours extensively across Ireland, UK, Europe and North America.

Former BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards Musician of the Year Mike McGoldrick is a highly accomplished multi-

instrumentalist and composer. Born in Manchester to Irish parents, he is a master of the wooden flute, low whistle and uilleann pipes, making him a go-to contributor for many artists including Vicente Amigo, Zac Brown Band, Xosë Manuel Budiño, Jerry Douglas, Julie Fowlis,



Darrell Scott, Nolwenn Leroy, Tim O'Brien, Dirk Powell and Kate Rusby. Mike has collaborated with Mark Knopfler since 2009 and been a core member of the Transatlantic Sessions since 2007.

This tour will also fea-

ture the world premieres of three new Music Network commissions: a song commission by Niall McCabe and instrumental commissions by Nollaig Casey and Mike McGoldrick. They will premiere on 24th Sept in Pavilion Theatre, Dun

Laoghair. The tour will continue on to take in dates in September and October in Galway, Roscommon, Clare, Wicklow, Kerry and Cork, with the added bonus of a gig in London at World Heart Beat Embassy Gardens.

€56,000 in funding for First Responder vehicle in Bray

An Taoiseach Simon Harris has announced funding for Order Of Malta Ambulance Corp Bray Unit to provide for a new vehicle. This is positive news the Taoiseach said, and added the immense benefit this would have to the organisation.



The Taoiseach is continuing to work with the Department of Rural and Community Development to source funding for organisations across the county and provide for communities in each town and village.

Speaking last Friday the Taoiseach said: "I am delighted today to announce €56,000 in funding for First Responder vehicle in Bray. We know how essential the first responders service is in County Wicklow and I as Taoiseach am committed to supporting them with what they need to do their job. This new vehicle will do just that."

"First responders are the first on the front line and I am determined they are equipped with state of the art and upgraded equipment. Overall today 48 vehicles across the country are being funded by organisations as part



An Taoiseach Simon Harris with members of the Order Of Malta Ambulance Corp Bray Unit.

Donnelly meets three Wicklow groups in the running for National Lottery Good Causes Awards 2024

In just four weeks, three organisations from Co. Wicklow will compete for a chance to win prize money and an award at this year's National Lottery Good Causes Awards. These local groups are among the 35 National Finalists from across Ireland who will be celebrated for their exceptional contributions to communities. The Good Causes Awards recognise and honour the incredible charities and organisations that receive funding from the National Lottery, showcasing their impact on the lives of people throughout the country.

The Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue (GOIMRT), a finalist in the Community category, are fully voluntary who give up their own time to help those in need. Founded in 1983, the team provides a search and rescue service, free of charge, in the Wicklow mountains and surrounding areas

24/7, 365 days/year.

Kiltegan GAA, a finalist in the Sport category, is a small rural club at the heart of Kiltegan village in West Wicklow, working in conjunction with the wider village community to improve community facilities for all members of the community and beyond, while

being fully inclusive and sustaining their rural future.

BirdWatch Ireland, a finalist in the Heritage category, is the largest independent conservation organisation in Ireland. A registered charity, its aim is the conservation of wild birds and their habitats. Established in 1968, it has over

15,000 members and 30 local branches.

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly spoke of his admiration for the three groups who provide essential services within his constituency and to the wider community.

"I'm absolutely delighted to meet with Diarmuid, Jamie, Robert and Sandra from Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue, Ciaran and Paula from Kiltegan GAA, as well as Fergus and Valerie from Birdwatch Ireland. Three fantastic local organisations in Wicklow that

have made it to the National Finals of the Good Causes Awards 2024. These organisations demonstrate the incredible community spirit and dedication that define our county, from providing critical rescue services in the mountains to championing inclusivity in sport, to the conservation of wild birds. It's a privilege to see their hard work and passion recognised on a national stage, and I wish them the very best of luck next month."

The National Lottery Good Causes Awards 2024 are set to take place on Saturday 12th October in

Killashee House Hotel in Co. Kildare where each of the seven category winners will receive €10,000 and the overall Good Cause of the Year will take home an additional €25,000.

The categories in which each of the 35 National Finalists are set to compete are:

- Arts & Culture
- Community
- Health & Wellbeing
- Heritage
- Irish Language
- Sport
- Youth



Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly pictured alongside Cian Murphy, CEO of the National Lottery and three organisations who are all in the running for this year's National Lottery Good Causes Awards. (Photography by Julien Behal Photography).

PLANNING PL

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Trisha Byrne am applying to Wicklow County Council for Planning Permission to retain alterations to elevations and floor plans that differs to that granted under PRR No: 23/60208 at 7A Roselawn Park, Boghall Road. Brav A98 XZD0.

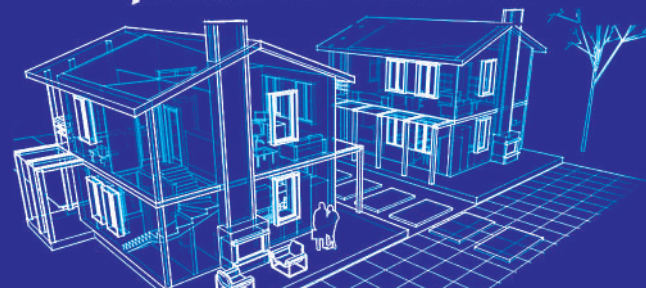
The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority 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.

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Wicklow featured on France's most popular TV news programme

County Wicklow enjoyed an extensive five minute feature on French TV during the '20h de TF1' show, France's most popular news programme. The featured was aired on Thursday 5th September, to an estimated audience of more than 5 million viewers throughout France.

The programme was shot in May of this year, when Wicklow enjoyed a lovely sunny spell. Organised through Tourism Ireland's office in Paris, and with the support of Wicklow County Council, TF1 Journalists experienced a two day itinerary of Wicklow that included locations such as Bray seafront, over-

scount Gardens and Distillery, Wicklow National Park, Lough Tay, Beyond the Trees at Avondale and Mickey Finns Pub.

"Such a programme is extremely welcome", says Cllr. Paul O'Brien, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council. From 2024, Irish Ferries and

Brittany Ferries are offering train booking facilities for foot passengers between Ireland and France. With such strong rail connections, Wicklow

is ideally located to attract French visitors arriving either at Dublin or Rosslare ports."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman also commented on the importance of programme, "France is our nearest European neighbour, and Wicklow has a real opportunity to attract French visitor. Such a programme is an amazing opportunity to raise awareness of Wicklow to that market."

TF1 Journalist Delphine Sitbon commented on her trip: "We spent two days in County Wicklow with my colleague behind the camera Alix Ponsar. What surprised us the most was the incredible diversity of the landscapes, such as the ělunari bogs up the Wicklow Mountains, to the lush green of the forests, and the amazing beauty of the coastline. We also loved the great atmosphere in the pubs and how friendly the Irish were! Following such a great trip, it was difficult to return to Paris: thanks to the Irish for their welcome!"

The programme is



To celebrate Bray Comhaltas classes returning to Bray in Colaiste Raithin and Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath from this month, they invited families and friends to join them for a Trad Jam session in Bray on 31st August. Past and present members entertained guests with a selection of traditional Irish music tunes. There were whistles, flutes, fiddles, banjos, bodhrans, concertinas, uilleann pipes and harps. It was a wonderful fun session for all.



Journalist Delphine Sitbon and Camera Alix Ponsar interviewing Wicklow visitors up the Wicklow Mountains. Photo Wicklow County Council.

CLASSIFIEDS

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

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Note that during funeral Masses in Kilcoole we will be closed during the hearse arriving and leaving as a mark of respect.



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