



HERITAGE NETWORK
Page 4



ACTIVE RETIREMENT
Page 6



HANNAH LEONARD
Page 8

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Monday 16th December 2024 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

RED LIGHT FOR GREENWAY

The planning application for the Blessington Greenway has been rejected by An Bord Pleanala (ABP). In a major decision, ABP denied permission for the project to proceed, noting adverse impacts on the surrounding area, concerns over a lack of detail on the environmental impact and the potential for pollution of the drinking water supply at Poulaphouca Reservoir.

The application was made by Wicklow County Council in January 2022. The proposed development is for a Greenway path for pedestrians and cyclists covering approximately 33km. It would involve the provision and upgrading of a greenway mostly through forest and woodlands adjacent to the shoreline of the Blessington Lakes and Poulaphouca

Reservoir Special Protection Area and in proximity to the Wicklow Mountains Special Protective Area and Special Area of Conservation.

Traffic lights were proposed at three existing bridge crossings (Knockiemann Bridge, Baltyboys Bridge and Vallemount Bridge) to manage a new shuttle system for vehicles.

A Natura Impact

Statement was lodged by the Council on the basis of the development's likely significant impact.

ABP's decision stated that it was "not satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the Wicklow Mountains Special Area of Conservation (SAC)



Ted Nolan talking to Santa at the Annacurra camogie Christmas Market. Pic: Michael Kelly.

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and the Poulaphouca Reservoir Special Protective Area."

ABP also stated that it had concerns that the increased presence of pedestrians and cyclists would disturb and displace "Special Conservation Interest bird species".

The decision states "In overall conclusion, the Board is not satisfied on the basis of the information on file that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites in view of the Sites' conservation objectives. The Board is therefore precluded from granting permission."

The site of the proposed development is located around the shoreline of Poulaphouca Reservoir, which is one of two major sources of water supply for the Greater Dublin Area.

ABP stated "the protection of the reservoir as a drinking water source is

of national importance [...] The Board is not satisfied [...] that the proposed development will not adversely effect the treatability of the drinking water source and has also failed to adequately demonstrate that the proposed development would not give rise to a potential deterioration of the Water Framework Directive status of the adjoining waterbody. The proposed development would, therefore, give rise to a potential source of water pollution."

Reacting to the decision, newly elected TD, Edward Timmins said "Whist I am fully behind a Greenway I had serious reservations about this Plan. None of the local representatives were consulted, I felt there was inadequate parking and toilet provisions, there was going to be major disruption to cars with bridges being traffic lighted and main street

parking eliminated."

Councillor Gerry O'Neill had similar concerns, saying "nobody

was consulted, bridges were to be narrowed which then couldn't accomodate farm mach-

inery and farmers were not consulted. I am all for a Greenway but we need local consultation."

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The Greystones Active Retirement Association (GARA) Christmas Lunch 2024/2025 will take place on 2nd January 2025 in the Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy, 1pm to 5pm. This annual lunch is always a terrific event with wonderful atmosphere, good company, and fabulous music from Tommy Carroll. It promises to be an enjoyable afternoon to finish up the Christmas season. Tickets are €30, fabulous raffle with great prizes. Please remember that friends and family are welcome to come along as well. Bring your bestie, even if they are not a Member of GARA Greystones. They will be made most welcome. For further details, please contact garagreystonesplus@gmail.com or telephone Kathleen Kelleher (087 2845 465). Tickets are also on sale each Thursday morning before Christmas in Kilian House, behind Holy Rosary Church, 10.30 am to 11.30 am. Cheques are welcome. Please make payable to Greystones Active Retirement Association. Photo by John McGowan.

New meet-up group

A new monthly meet-up group has been created for people who are new (or newish) around the Wicklow town, Rathnew and Ashford area. The group was set up on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1435874983669459>) by Alexander Kenny in January this year and now has about 1,000 members. The group is to help people connect and make new friends as it can be challenging to do so in a new town. "It's all about building connections and many members have told me how much they value the group," Alexander says. The groups meets on the last Friday of each month from 8pm in O'Shea's Corner in Wicklow Town.

Bray Lions Club New Year's Day Swim

Save the date! The Bray Lions Club's annual New Year's Day fundraising swim will be held on Wednesday 1st January at 12 noon. The meeting point is The Martello. The swim will raise funds for the Lions Club's Christmas dinner deliveries, W.H. Five Loaves, Bray Women's Refuge, Marino Special School, and New Court School.

Christmas Carols by Candlelight

Carols by Candlelight at St Kevin's Church, Glendalough on Tuesday 17th December at 7:30pm. All are welcome. Refreshments will be served. There will also be a donation box for church upkeep.

Wicklow Mountains National Park

Great news from the Spinc. The new trail is now completed and open for walkers. The WHITE, RED & BLUE trails are now open again without any detours.

Laragh Active Retirement

The group will break for Christmas on Tuesday 17th celebrating with carol singing from Scoil Chaoimhin Naofa students. The active retirement group meets every Tuesday morning from 10.45am to 12.15pm in the Brockagh Centre. So if you fancy a chat, a cuppa and some light exercise, dancing and music come along on Tuesdays.

"We always welcome new members to join our group. We would like to encourage anyone who loves arts & crafts to share your skills with other members, come along and join us. If anyone would like to offer their services or share their skills with the group please contact us by calling Denise on 0404 45600, email brockaghoffice@gmail.com or drop in to the centre. They will be returning on the 11th of February after the Winter break.

Simple ways to navigate Christmas with care and compassion

While Christmas is a joyful time for many, it can also bring feelings of loneliness, stress, and suicidal thoughts for others. Last Christmas Day alone, Pieta's 24/7 Crisis Helpline received 70 calls and 142 texts from those with suicidal thoughts.

Based on data from previous years, and an increase in calls during 2024, these numbers are expected to rise for Christmas 2024, with hundreds more likely to reach out for help during the Christmas period.

Pieta's National Services Manager and psychotherapist, Verona Farrell, has shared essential advice on how to look out for ourselves this Christmas: "Christmas is a time when many feel the pressure to be everything

to everyone, but it's crucial to remember that taking care of your own mental and emotional wellbeing is just as important. By recognising your own needs and allowing yourself moments of rest and self-care, you can better support those around you and truly enjoy the season. It's okay to take a step back, say no when you need to, and prioritise your own health - it's not only important for you but for those who care about you as well."

Verona has laid out some advice to tackle Christmas pressure:

- Be honest about money
- Christmas can be expensive, even more so right now with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. But it's okay to tell your family and friends what you can afford.
- Suggest alternatives like Secret Santa or spending time together instead of exchanging gifts. Focus on making meaningful memories rather than stressing over your budget.
- Make space for grief
- If you've lost someone this year, Christmas can be especially tough. It's normal to feel a range of emotions, from sadness to anger. Take time to reflect, start a new tradition in their memory, or share stories about them.
- Take time for yourself
- The busy Christmas season can leave you

feeling drained. It's okay to say no to social events and carve out some time for rest. Whether it's staying in to watch a favourite movie, or enjoying a quiet moment, looking after yourself is important.

- Keep hosting simple
- If you're hosting Christmas, it doesn't have to be perfect. Ask guests to bring a dish, try a simpler meal, or even head to a restaurant to save time and money.
- Tackle loneliness
- Spending Christmas alone can be tough, but there are ways to make it easier.

Plan your day around things you enjoy, like a walk, a favourite meal, or a chat with friends. If you're feeling isolated, think about joining a community event or reaching out to someone you trust. You don't have to face it alone.

- Get support if you need it
- If you're struggling this Christmas, it's okay to ask for help. Pieta's Crisis Helpline is available 24/7, even on Christmas day, with our team of qualified therapists and counsellors offering round-the-clock

support if you are thinking of self-harming, suicide, or have lost someone to suicide. Call 1800 247 247, or text 'HELP' to 51444.

To access Pieta's services or learn more about recognising the signs of suicide, visit www.pieta.ie. Together, we can ensure that no one faces this Christmas alone.



Influencer and Pieta supporter Louise Cooney and Pieta's National Services Manager and psychotherapist Verona Farrell.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,
Season's Greetings to all from the North Pole!

Letters are pouring in from all around the world so I would like to remind all the boys and girls in Ireland to write and post their letters to me as soon as possible.

This is what the boys and girls need should do:

- Write their own letter to me
- Put it in an envelope, seal it and address it to 'Santa Claus, The North Pole'
- Write their own name and full postal address (in clear handwriting) on the top left-hand corner on the front of the envelope
- Stick a €1.40 stamp on the top right-hand corner and
- Post it in a green An Post postbox - that's important!

My friends in An Post are helping me to reply to as many children's letters as possible again this year - I'm expecting more than 130,000!

Wishing everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas.
Santa Claus

P.S. Rudolph is busy training for the long journey on Christmas Eve so he is looking forward to some nice treats!

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New Government for whom?

"As the talks to form a new Government continue, it is sobering to read of the hundreds of people turned away from the Capuchin Food Bank two weeks before Christmas, the sickening delays in accessing vital therapies for children with autism and the exorbitant rise in the price of new houses caused by the low levels of house building this year and every year for the past 14 years," asserts Independent councillor Joe Behan.

He continues "So, the question must be asked, who exactly is going to see their lives improved because a new Government will be formed soon? We know the big winners will be the recycled Taoiseach and Tanaiste, the shiny new Cabinet Ministers, the newly appointed Government advisers some of whom will be plucked from the ranks of the media and the plethora of Junior Ministers, Chairs of Dail Committees, assorted other Oireachtas committees, all of which will ensure that the holders of all of the above positions will be extremely generously paid and they definitely will not have to stand in the freezing cold dark winter mornings, queuing for a food parcel, this Christmas or indeed any Christmas.

We are going to see the return to power of the two parties who are responsible, along with the Greens, for the record numbers of homeless families, including almost 5,000 children, the disgraceful and



Cllr. Joe Behan.

appalling treatment of children with special education needs, the soaring levels of mental health challenges and the biting hardship of rising food and fuel prices experienced by so many older citizens and families in this supposedly wealthy country.

As they ponder how to divvy up the spoils of the political victory they have won, the new Taoiseach, Tanaiste etc should be very careful because their promises to fix all of our national and local challenges will be scrutinised every minute of every day they are in office and they will face the wrath of the

people if they look after themselves but fail to look after the people they were elected to serve."

Speaking recently about the housing crisis, Sinn Féin TD John Brady said "The housing crisis is the single biggest political issue facing the people across the state. In our county here in Wicklow we have some of the highest rents and house prices in the country outside Dublin. A whole generation has been priced out of the housing market. And the fact is that while they have talked at length about what



John Brady TD.

they will do, the crisis just got worse and worse over the last several years under Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. They just lack the abilities and imagination needed to tackle the problem.

"Sinn Féin believes that you should have a home of your own. A home in which you feel safe and secure. A home that meets your needs. A home that you can afford. A Home Of Your Own sets the course to ending the housing crisis so that you can have a home of your own."

Deputy Brady also spoke out recently on the cost-of-living crisis which he says is now "out of control".

He said "It was clear from my conversations with the people I met on the doors, and from evidence across the country that the cost-of-living crisis is far from over. Ireland under a Fine Gael, and Fianna Fáil government has been one of the most expensive countries in Europe, with only Denmark ahead. Price averages here are running

at 43% higher than the EU average.

"The rate of inflation has slowed but there has been no reversal in the unchecked price gouging that inflation precipitated. Prices are still extortionate. Ordinary workers and families are struggling with the weight of these additional costs, which are hitting them across the board. Food prices are now 29% more expensive than they were at the time

of the 2020 general election. And not only are food prices going up, but the size of the product we are buying is shrinking and the ingredients that are being put into food products is less than it was.

"So, we are paying more for less, and quality is now less than we are used to. This is just scandalous. Energy costs have risen between 70% to 80% since the Russian

invasion of Ukraine. We have the most expensive diesel in Europe here in Ireland - which is inflated by 5 separate government levies. The cost of motor insurance has risen for 14 months in a row! It is now running at an incredible 15 times the rate of inflation. How can this be so? Why is nothing being done to put an end to this madness!

"House insurance has also gone up 7% to 8%.

Others have faced health insurance increases of between 10% and 25% depending on your policy. I'm afraid to list the rent and mortgage increases in case it pushes people over the edge completely. This is what Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil delivered for the workers and families of this state. Fine Gael has had 14 years to address the problems of the state - the evidence is clear - they have failed."



Mason Doyle with Santa at the turning on of the Christmas Lights in Avoca.



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Expansion of Wicklow Heritage Network



The Wicklow Heritage Forum Group at the ICAN Network launch in Roundwood Parish Hall.



Eileen Flanagan, Marie Cleary, Beverly Weir and Leonard Weir of the Tinahely History at the ICAN Network launch in Roundwood Parish Hall.

On Monday, 9th December five new community heritage recording groups were welcomed into the Irish Community Archive Network (ICAN) during a special launch event held in Roundwood. This event was coordinated by the Heritage Office of Wicklow County Council.

The newly welcomed groups are: the Roundwood Historical Society, the United Friends of Derralossary, the Blessington Historical Group, Tinahely History and the Wicklow Town Archive Film Project.

These groups join an existing network in County Wicklow, which now includes eleven groups in total.

The established members are: Donard Imaal History, Glendalough Heritage Forum, Medieval Bray Project, Rathdown Ancient Heartlands, Delgany Heritage Village and Glens of Lead. The Wicklow ICAN network is coordinated by the Heritage Officer of Wicklow County Council in collaboration with the Wicklow County Archives service and the Wicklow Local Studies librarian.

Speaking at the launch, the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Paul O'Brien, stated "I am delighted to be here to welcome new groups to the ICAN network. Community Archives are an invaluable tool, giving local groups the required skills and support to collect, preserve and make accessible their local history and



Tom O'Mahony, Lorna Elms and Colin Love at the ICAN Network launch in Roundwood Parish Hall.

heritage online."

Wicklow County Council's Chief Executive, Emer O'Gorman, also welcomed the expansion of the Wicklow ICAN network stating "Wicklow County Council supports this partnership with the National

Museum and The Heritage Council, and we recognize ICAN as a vital component of our heritage infrastructure in County Wicklow, as outlined in the County Wicklow Heritage Plan."

Lorna Elms, ICAN co-ordinator with the

National Museum of Ireland attended the event, commenting that "We are delighted to add these new Wicklow community archives to our network which currently includes thirty eight group nationally. As well as documenting information about local people, places, folklore, customs and traditions, community archives are also a valuable resource for genealogy and ancestry projects."

A representative from each of the five new member groups delivered a brief presentation about their activities and future

plans. Anyone with an interest in nature, history, or cultural heritage in County Wicklow is encouraged to visit the ICAN websites at <https://wicklowheritage.org/> where they will discover a wealth of local information.

The sites are interactive, allowing visitors to share comments and stories easily. As these sites are volunteer-run, they are always looking for new members to get involved. Interested individuals can find contact details on each site to reach out.

Two built heritage grant schemes currently open

Applications are currently open for two built heritage grant schemes; The Historic Structures Fund and The Community Monuments Fund 2025. Both schemes are operated by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and administered by the Heritage Office, Wicklow County Council.

The Historic Structure Fund (HSF) 2025 will offer grants for architectural projects from €50,000 to €200,000 to support substantial enhancements, refurbishments or re-use of heritage structures. Such projects must demonstrate a clear community or public benefit, or a clear residential benefit and must go through the necessary planning process.

HSF provides capital for works to qualifying structures, including protected structures, those eligible for or proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures, and structures located within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). A smaller grant under the Historic Thatch Building stream is also available, with a maximum of €5,000.

The closing date for applications is 4.00pm Friday 17th January.



Cllr. Paul O'Brien.

For more information regarding the Historic Structure Fund please visit: <https://www.wicklow.ie/Living/News-Events/applications-invited-to-historic-structure-fund-hsf-historic-thatch-building-fund-2025>

The Community Monuments Fund (CMF) 2025 aims to invest in Ireland's archaeological heritage and is prioritized for local authorities, private own-

ers, custodians, and community groups. The aim of the fund is to enable conservation work on significant monuments in urgent need of support, to enhance the resilience of monuments against climate change, and to encourage access and improve the presentation of these monuments. The closing date for applications is the 31st January, 2025.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Paul O'Brien, stated, "These two grant schemes will provide much-needed investment in our valuable archaeological and architectural heritage, helping owners and custodians safeguard these assets for the benefit of communities and the public."

Wicklow County Council Chief Executive, Emer O'Gorman, said, "Wicklow County Council is pleased to coordi-

nate these initiatives to support our heritage for future generations."

For more information regarding the Community Monuments Fund please visit: <https://www.wicklow.ie/Living/News-Events/community-monuments-fund-cmf-2025-now-open-for-applications>.



Emer O'Gorman, WCC Chief Executive.



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Public warned to avoid Varty walking trails while storm cleanup continues

Following the impact of high winds from Storm Darragh, Uisce Eireann is working with Dublin City Council to remove a significant number of fallen trees in Vartry Reservoir Woodland areas. Fallen trees have blocked the main access points to the Upper Vartry Reservoir Park and Dam. A significant number of trees are also partially uprooted and at a heightened risk of falling.

Uisce Eireann, working with Dublin City Council, have mobilised a contractor to clear all uprooted trees, undertake a risk assessment of remaining trees, and remove additional trees which may pose a risk to the public. This work is likely to take a number of weeks to complete.

Uisce Eireann stated "We are appealing to the public to avoid the Vartry Upper Reservoir Park and surrounding areas until works to ensure the area is safe are complete. To facilitate these essential works, all public walking trails in and around the park will be closed

until the end of January 2025. The affected areas will be fenced off to restrict access during the holiday period and prevent any potential harm to the public.

"In the interest of public safety, the following areas will be closed to the public until further notice:

- Vartry Upper Reservoir Park - Vartry Upper Dam Crest
- Roundwood Reservoir - Upper Vartry Trail
- Vartry Upper Reservoir - Car Park and Layby along R765
- Vartry Upper - Woodland Trail
- * Vartry Upper - Roundwood Reservoir Woodpecker Trail

• All woodland walking trails in and around Vartry Upper Reservoir

"Uisce Eireann acknowledge the inconvenience that these closures may cause, particularly during the holiday season, and appreciate the community's understanding and cooperation as we prioritise public safety. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates when available. We would like to thank Wicklow County Council and Dublin City Council for their support with the ongoing clean-up efforts at the Vartry Upper Reservoir."

Kilcoole footpath and road improvements welcomed

Cllr Stephen Stokes has welcomed planned improvements for Kilcoole. Wicklow County Council is planning to finish the footpath between Kilcoole Community Centre and the Knockroe roundabout. This work is planned for the first quarter of 2024. Separately, Wicklow County Council is also planning to resurface the road.



Cllr Stokes in Kilcoole .

Cllr Stephen Stokes stated: "This work for Kilcoole is badly needed. The condition of the footpath and road is a safety concern, first and foremost. Secondly it's not a good look for the area, especially to have a half finished footpath in such a prominent location. As such I am delighted that this work is now planned."

The upgrades were confirmed at a full meeting of the Greystones Municipal District. The road resurfacing is expected to take a week to complete. However it is not expected to take place in December, to avoid disruption during the festive season.

Cllr Stokes added: "I have been calling for these improvements for some time. They are well overdue for Kilcoole. Hopefully they will be of great benefit to the community. I would like to thank Wicklow County Council for their efforts. I will continue to campaign for improvements for Kilcoole, Charlesland, Delgany, Greystones, Killadreenan and Newcastle."



Val, Liam and Cara Theobalt with May Cosgrave at the turning on of the Christmas Lights in Wicklow Town.



India Doran, Conor O'Toole and Daisie Mae Hogan at the Annacurra Camogie Club's Christmas Market.

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Wicklow Active Retirement team finalists at national bowls competition

Wicklow Active Retirement bowls team Baltinglass have taken second prize in the small bowls cup final at the 2024 Active Retirement Ireland national indoor mats bowling competition, which took place at the Gleneagle INEC Arena in Killarney, Co Kerry last week.



Baltinglass team member Bernie Doyle pictured in the small bowls final at the Active Retirement Ireland national bowls finals in the Gleneagle INEC, Killarney last Thursday. Photo: Don MacMonagle.



Baltinglass team members, Tony Norton, Mary Hayes, Bernie Doyle and John Doran pictured with Mai Quaid (centre), national president, Active Retirement Ireland, at the Active Retirement Ireland national bowls finals in the Gleneagle INEC, Killarney. Photo: Don MacMonagle.

Baltinglass team members Bernie Doyle, Mary Hayes, Tony Norton and skip John Doran were presented with their award by Active Retirement Ireland national president Mai Quaid on 12th December after finishing runners-up in their final against the Tullow Rollers bowls team from Co Carlow.

Over three days, 42 Active Retirement teams from across the country competed for the Active Retirement Ireland Cup in indoor mat bowls at the organisation's twelfth annual flagship event.

Speaking at the awards presentation, Active Retirement Ireland CEO Maureen Kavanagh said: "Congratulations to Baltinglass bowls team on their success at this year's National Bowls Competition. They have met strong competition from many talented teams over the past few days and should be very proud of their achievement."

"This competition is testament to the drive and determination of older people to enjoy an active and social lifestyle and age well. The 168 bowlers who have competed this week, our

volunteer officials and all Active Retirement Ireland members are the epitome of positive ageing and should be fully supported in their commitment to getting out there and living their best lives.

"The government has a real opportunity now to build strong policies into the new programme for government that will embed a positive ageing framework in Ireland and enable older people to live independent, active and full lives. We are grateful to our event host the Gleneagle Hotel in Killarney for being an ally to older people

and recognising the valuable contribution that they make, and for their generous support in making this event possible each year."

There are 515 local Active Retirement Associations (ARAs) in local communities across Ireland - groups of older people who come together to organise social events and activities to reduce isolation and loneliness - supported by the national body Active Retirement Ireland.

For more information about Active Retirement Ireland, see www.activeirl.ie.

Newtown Tidy Towns launch 2025 Calendar

Newtownmountkennedy and District Tidy Towns have launched the 2025 version of their popular local calendar. This year's theme is 'The clubs and schools in Newtownmountkennedy' and features group photos of the local sports clubs, scouts and primary schools.

There are also historic photos marking anniversaries of achievements in the town for groups such as Newtown GAA and Newtown United and photos of events throughout the past year, such as the Tidy Towns 'Spooktacular' Halloween event in the local woods. The calendar was put together by members of the Tidy Towns group and is on sale for €7 in the local post office and Eugene's food store.

Speaking about launching the calendar, Newtown Tidy Towns chairperson Jen Quinn said: "This calendar is one of the main sources of fundraising for our group each year and the funds raised will help us make improvements around the town in 2025. It was great fun putting the calendar together with great enthusiasm from our local community, teams and clubs, many of whom will be sending it overseas to family and friends. I

would like to thank them all for taking part in this project and I can't wait for everyone in the community to see the great selection of photos put together. A very big thank you also to Druids Glen Hotel and Golf Resort, who we approached to be our main sponsor this year, and to all of the other local businesses in the town who sponsored specific months. We really appreciate everyone's support in purchasing the calendar."



Sinead and Grace McGarry of Terrific Trinkets at the Annacurra Camogie Club Christmas market.



Wicklow ITF Taekwon-do Club as featured in the Newtown Tidy Towns Calendar.

Medals for three local Muay Thai fighters at European Championships

Three Wicklow fighters from the Jai Sua Martial Arts club recently won medals at the World Muay Thai Organisation's (WMO) European Championships in Cyprus. A trio of fighters from the local club competed in the Championships - Caleb Long (16), Cody Butler (17) and Des Brennan (16). Both Caleb and Cody won Gold Medals while Des won a Silver medal.

Excluding the hosts, Ireland overall were the most successful team at the competition, winning a total of 11 Gold medals out of 14.

The event in Limassol from 20th to 25th November saw hundreds of competitors from across Europe take to the ring.

Muay Thai, the national sport of Thailand, has been growing in popularity across Ireland in recent years and is in the latter stages of a bid to be included in the Olympic Games.

Ireland has gone from having a handful of Muay Thai gyms operating 10 years ago to over 50 at present.

Their head coach is Rob Carry, a History and Politics graduate who stood in this year's local and General Elections as an Independent candidate. Jai Sua Muay Thai, located off Bray's Boghall Road, was established by Carry in 2014.

"I've been involved in this sport for 20 years but it's only recently started to really take off in terms of popularity," Carry says. "It's likely to feature in the next

Olympics as a demonstration sport and there are now major professional level events with prize purses in the millions.

"We've done our best to make Jai Sua a hub for the local community. We've run voter registration drives, mental health events and a string of charity fund-raisers for everything from Five Loaves Bray to Breast Cancer Ireland.

"We provide discounted group classes for kids and adults with additional needs from the National Learning Network and Festina Lente. We also done our best to facilitate those who may be struggling financially. If you can't afford to pay, you can train for free - no questions asked."

The club is also well known for its work in the youth mental health space. Carry explains, "We set up an initiative whereby we fundraise and then pay for mental health services for our students should they find themselves in crisis. We set them up with a private therapist and the bill comes to us. We felt the Government was badly

letting down young people in this regard, so we got together as a club and decided to step in and do what we could to help."

The club also hit the headlines recently after launching free women-only self-defence classes.



Head Coach Rob Carry (second from right) celebrating with his young fighters.



Caleb Long winning his Gold Medal.



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EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD



Hannah Leonard.

Fundraising night in Bray for Hannah Leonard

There will be a fundraising night to support Hannah Leonard and her family with their medical emergency abroad. It will take place on Sunday 22nd December from 8pm in The Martello. €5 donation on arrival. There will be raffle prizes and live music from Matthew Harris aka Chameleon, Saoirse Miller and Jamie Duff.

In October, while in Sicily, Hannah was completing her final long distance training run for the Dublin marathon. Sadly she never got to finish the run as after just a few kilometers she was struck by a car while crossing at a pedestrian crossing and suffered devastating brain injuries.

Hannah underwent three hours of life-saving neurosurgery where a large piece of her skull was removed in order to access her brain and relieve the pressure. The piece of skull has yet to be replaced. Following her neurosurgery she was transferred to ICU where she remains today.

A GoFundMe page was set up by Ralph Leonard. On the page Ralph explains "The initial prognosis was not good, but the Neurosurgeons in Sicily said they considered Hannah to be like their little sister and vowed not to give up hope, her survival was their top priority.

"Since the initial surgery Hannah has undergone several additional surgeries including a tracheotomy and fitting of a catheter to her head to remove excess brain fluid, she is receiving frequent CT scans in order to monitor the swelling on her brain however, she has remained in a coma since the accident.

"We are beginning to see some glimmers of hope as she has started to react to touch and is making some minor movement, what her recovery will look like is still unknown. Hannah is an amazing young woman and her strength and determination is what has kept her with us. She's a fighter who is making her family prouder day by day at how resilient she is. She will be utterly devastated when she learns that she missed the Dublin Marathon which she was due to complete 10 years after her Dad completed it, both of them dedicating it to Hannah's grandmother Caroline.

"Hannah's Dad (Kevin), Mum (Vanessa), Brother (Dylan), Sister (Lily) and Boyfriend (Cathal) are all in Sicily with her, visiting her in the ICU whenever permitted and hoping above all hope to see even the tiniest improvements each day. This gofundme is on behalf of Hannah and her family to support them with their expenses."

Last week, Ralph posted the following update: "We are over 9 weeks into this journey, which no doubt will be a long one but Hannah has the self determination and strong will to get through it. Her surgeon remarked that if she wasn't so fit and mentally strong we would not be seeing the progress we are seeing. Each night before we leave her bedside I tell her how proud I am of her, to take her time to heal, that we love her and she's doing amazing.

"Our strength is taken not only from the loved ones around us but from the support of so many of you that continue to get in touch as well as donate to this page, from the bottom of our hearts thank you. We hear many miraculous stories of people in similar situations which give us a lot of hope. The National Yacht Club generously used their end of year table quiz to raise funds for Hannah, one of Hannah's best friends will be holding a music night in The Martello in Bray on the 22nd December and a group of her school friends are holding a raffle for her. Our other children continue to get amazing support from their schools, Loreto Bray and Presentation College Bray.

"Continue to hold your loved ones close, hug your kids tightly like you never want to let them go and never wait to say 'I love you!'"

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-hannah-leonard-and-her-family-while-they-navigate-her>

Newcastle family front LauraLynn Christmas appeal

LauraLynn Children's Hospice has launched its annual Christmas appeal, highlighting the vital support it provides to families like the Gibson O'Gara family from Newcastle. This year's campaign is fronted by Sarah Gibson and Marty O'Gara, who lost their beloved son Martin in 2021 at just 10 years old.

Martin, who was also a brother to Patrick, spent precious moments at LauraLynn, creating memories that his family will treasure forever. LauraLynn offers specialist paediatric palliative care services to babies, children, and young people with life-limiting conditions across Ireland. Since its opening in 2011, LauraLynn has supported 860 children and their families, helping them live well and make the most of every moment when life is short. The hospice relies primarily on fundraised income to provide its essential services.

Sarah Gibson, Martin's mum, shared her heart-felt experience: "Martin was non-verbal, needed intensive nursing care, and was regularly in-

and-out of hospital. But none of this stopped Martin from making the most of his life, and he absolutely adored spending time at LauraLynn. His eyes lit up every time we arrived there. LauraLynn is so in tune with every family member and so experienced and skilled at providing the right kind of support. I made a promise that Martin's light would never go out, and taking part in LauraLynn's Christmas Appeal means we have been able to tell Martin's story. Hopefully, it will help so many families like ours. Martin's light is definitely shining a little brighter today."

In 2023, LauraLynn provided 1,804 nights of In-Hospice Care and 2,143 Community Visits, offering services free of charge, including symptom management, music and play therapy, psychological support, family and sibling camps, short breaks, crisis care, end-of-life care, and bereavement support. Care is provided in hospice, at hospital, or in a child's home.

Kerry McLaverty, CEO of LauraLynn, expressed gratitude for the support: "We are so very grateful to Sarah, Marty, and Patrick for taking part in this year's Christmas Appeal, and

we hope that by hearing Martin's story, people will support us to help even more families like the Gibson O'Gara's all across the country. Children with palliative care needs and their families deserve to receive the care and support they need at every stage of their journey, from diagnosis to end of life and into bereavement. We are asking our supporters to help LauraLynn families like Martin's continue to receive the care and support they need by donating at lauralynn.ie."

LauraLynn's services are provided free of charge, and the hospice relies primarily on fundraised income to continue its work.

LauraLynn is Ireland's only Children's Hospice providing palliative and hospice care and support for children (0-18 years) with life-limiting conditions and their families from all across Ireland. LauraLynn, provides a range of services including, symptom management for children, music and play therapy, psychological support, family and sibling camps, short breaks, Crisis Care and End of Life Care.


To support LauraLynn's Christmas Appeal and help families like the Gibson O'Garas, please visit lauralynn.ie/donate.



Marty O'Gara, Sarah Gibson and Patrick Gibson O'Gara at LauraLynn. Photo by Tom Clarke.



The Gibson O'Gara Family with Santa at LauraLynn. Photo taken by Noel Hillis.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

Roads to be closed:
Greenpark Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Period of closure:
27th January 2025 and 28th January 2025 from 09:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. both days.

Alternative Routes:
Traffic will be diverted to lower Dargle Road, continue straight and turn left onto Sutton Road.

Reason for Closure
This road closure is necessary in order to facilitate works being carried out by Gas Networks Ireland.

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Roads, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 7th January, 2025.

Linda Healy,
Senior Executive Officer,
Transportation & Infrastructure Delivery.

'Next programme for Government must include clear positive ageing policies for people in Wicklow'

Active Retirement Ireland - the largest membership organisation for older people in the country - has called on those in the next government for greater support for initiatives that promote ageing well for people in Co Wicklow.

The organisation's CEO Maureen Kavanagh made the call last week at Active Retirement Ireland's 2024 National Bowls Competition, taking place in the Gleneagle INEC Killarney, where a Co. Wicklow team took part from Baltinglass Active Retirement Association (see page 6).

In its general election manifesto, Active Retirement Ireland called for the implementation of national initiatives to reduce isolation and enhance social inclusion, including increased funding and support for local community programmes and groups who are already working at the grassroots level to achieve this.

Ms Kavanagh said: "Social isolation and barriers to social inclusion are among the most pressing issues facing older people in Ireland today, including in Wicklow, and we are yet to see any meaningful steps by government to implement a cohesive national initiative to address this.

"The next programme for government must include clear policies to embed a positive ageing framework in Ireland, and

that recognise older people as active contributors to society who should be supported to maintain strong social connections and to age well. Ireland needs to move away from a medical model of ageing, where older people are viewed through a lens of care, dependency on services, and cost to society."

Forty-two four-player teams from Active Retirement Associations in 13 counties across Ireland, including Co Wicklow, were competing in the twelfth National Bowls Competition.

Ms Kavanagh continued: "The Active Retirement Ireland National Bowls Competition is a wonderful example of the drive and determination of older people to self-organise, participate in their own health and wellbeing and enjoy an active and social lifestyle.

"The 168 bowlers, including those from Baltinglass, volunteer officials and many spectators at this year's National Bowls Competition, and indeed our 24,000 members across the country, aren't waiting around for the government to act - they are get-

ting on with it. But they can't continue without support.

"Older people don't want things done for them; they want to be independent and active in their own lives. It's time the government instituted and implemented a comprehensive, whole-of-government positive ageing framework in Ireland so that they can."

The indoor mat bowls tournament is Active Retirement Ireland's flagship event for Active Retirement Association (ARA) members and includes 13 teams from Co Kerry, six from Co Cork, four from Co Waterford, three from each of counties Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford, two from each of counties Kildare, Tipperary and Meath, and one team from each of counties Laois, Westmeath, Galway and Wicklow.

There are 515 local Active Retirement Associations (ARAs) in local communities across Ireland - groups of older people who come together to organise social events and activities to reduce isolation and loneliness - supported by the national body Active Retirement Ireland.

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"The work experience was very helpful in building my confidence and I made lots of new friends in the centre. It's a safe supportive environment, with plenty of resources available to help you succeed."

NLN Student

Pathways

QQI Level 3 Employability Skills Major Award (3M0935)

Pathways helps you discover what you want to do and build practical skills in a supportive environment. We provide the environment for students to identify their strengths and future goals.

Build your confidence by working at your own pace, developing your skills to become ready for further education or employment. Classes are delivered in a supportive environment. Pathways offers the opportunity to gain a QQI Level 3 Major Award in Employability Skills.

Support from NLN

Our instructors and support staff specialise in providing extra supports. We will assist students to identify their personal goals and ambitions and help them make the next step successfully. Students learn at their own pace and can avail of numeracy and literacy supports.

Why Students choose NLN

- ◆ Free Training
- ◆ Supported training environment
- ◆ Small classes
- ◆ Psychological and advocacy support
- ◆ Make new friends
- ◆ Work at your own pace
- ◆ High quality work experiences
- ◆ Recognised QQI qualifications
- ◆ Continuous Intake
- ◆ Receive at least the same level of your current Social Protection payments
- ◆ Students age 16 or 17 will receive a training allowance
- ◆ Free parking or travel allowance if required
- ◆ Training course funded by the Kildare Wicklow Education Training Board (KWETB)
- ◆ Job-Seeking skills

Progression from NLN

On successful completion of the Pathways course, students gain a QQI Level 3 Major Award in Employability Skills. This provides a pathway to further education or training at QQI Level 4 or 5, or employment in a variety of areas.

Brian McSorley | Training Instructor,
National Learning Network,
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Wayne and Abbie Hudson with Santa at the turning on of the Christmas Lights in Avoca.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

from your Local Representatives

CLLR Gerry O'Neill

INDEPENDENT

Member of Baltinglass Municipal Electoral Area

Wishing all a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year

Ph.: 087 2629129



Jodi and Cody Flemming at the Annacurra camogie club Christmas Market.



Casey Doyle with Santa at the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Avoca.

FINE GAEL

Wishing everybody a Safe & Happy Christmas and New Year

Cllr. Peter STAPELTON

Baltinglass LEA

087 972 5067 peterstapleton.finegael@outlook.com

Merry Christmas from Purple House Cancer Support

"Purple House Cancer Support would like to extend our deep gratitude to our supporters who are there for families living with cancer all year long. Their generosity, commitment and belief in Purple House make our work here possible and we are incredibly grateful for our community."

"We wish all of our supporters and clients a peaceful, safe and Happy Christmas. Purple House will close for the Christmas period on Friday, December 20th and will reopen on Monday, January 6th. Please visit www.purplehouse.ie to learn more about our services or to send a Christmas gift."

Cllr. Melanie CORRIGAN

FINE GAEL

Wishing everyone in the Community a very Peaceful Christmas

083 364 2439 melaniebraywest@gmail.com @MelanieBrayWest @MelanieBrayWest



Ava Stanley at the switching on of the Treetop Christmas Night Lights in Avondale.

INDEPENDENT

Beannachtaí na Nollaig Oraibh ó

Cllr. Malachai DUDDY

M.C.C.

mduddy@wicklowcoco.ie 087 426 9418

CLLR. WARREN O'TOOLE

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Sinn Féin

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

from your Local Representatives

2024 Giving Tree provides local charities with over 350 Christmas gifts

This year's Giving Tree in Bray was a huge success yet again. Thanks to the generous contributions from the Bray public and despite of storm Darragh, Soroptimist International Bray & District received more than 350 gifts as well as more than €1500 in vouchers and cash.



Orla Finn and Jo at the Giving Tree.

This will go towards supporting;

1. Purple House Cancer Support
2. Five Loaves
3. Bray Family Resource Development
4. Bray Women's Refuge
5. Arke Housing
6. Open Door
7. SVP Ballywaltrim and Holy Redeemer
8. Refugees in our community

SI Bray sincerely thanks all those who contributed, including the numerous volunteers without whom the Giving Tree could not have survived for more than 20 years!

They said "A special thank you to the employees of HSE Community Healthcare East who instead of their internal Christmas Kindle decided to externally share the spirit of Christmas by giving to the Giving Tree, as well as St Gerards school for its support. Join us next year in early December for the 2025 Giving Tree (contact: braysoroptimistsinternational@gmail.com)."



Tanja and Jo from Soroptimist International Bray at the Giving Tree.

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agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise
do chuile duine

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Billy Kelleher MEP

Cynthia Ní Mhurchú MEP

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EUROPE MATTERS

FIANNA FÁIL
AN PAIRTÍ POBLACHTÁNACH

renew europe.

National Learning Network Christmas Market raises over €3,500 for youth mental health

Students and staff in National Learning held their third Christmas Market on Friday 6th December, it was a great success with over €3,500 raised for Jigsaw Wicklow - Youth Mental Health Services.

NLN would like to thank everyone who came along and enjoyed the market. They supported this great cause by purchasing lovely crafts, handmade by the students, enjoying "Spin the Wheel", buying festive plants and flowers and having burgers and hot chocolate & cake! They really appreciate everyone supporting the fundraiser, particularly in view of the inclement weather

last Friday!

In the last 12 months students and staff in the Centre have run five events to support great causes

- Christmas 2023 - raised €2600 for the Shauna Kavanagh Foundation
- March - September 2024 - Various events for the Team Hope Initiative - raised €1,940
- May 2024 - raised €1,200 - Crohn's & Colitis Ireland

- October 2024 - raised €1,950 for Ark Housing
- Christmas 2024 - Jigsaw Wicklow - Youth Mental Health Services - raised €3,500

The brilliant training courses at our Bray training centre incorporate practical projects in addition to QQI educational qualifications. These projects include fundraisers, horticulture projects to improve our garden space, cooking and healthy eat-

ing projects, work experience at the TEAM HOPE distribution centre, attending HACCP and Barista training and various employment, health and fitness activities.

The key is that all these projects focus on the student's abilities and strengths. Their purpose is to teach work skills and develop confidence, initiative and team working - all essential in today's workplace.



Aoife McGrath and Shay Hiney at the National Learning Network Christmas Fair in Bray.



Tutor Brian McSorley with the burger making team at the National Learning Network Christmas Fair in Bray.



Cole Smyth, Kate Murphy and Dean Cannon at the National Learning Network Christmas Fair in Bray.



Claire Kealy and Deborah Coughlin at the National Learning Network Christmas Fair in Bray.



Alison Gapert, Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien, Adam Burke and Oonagh Hodkinson at the National Learning Network Christmas Fair in Bray.

ISME calls for Wicklow shoppers to Think Local this Christmas

ISME is asking consumers in Wicklow to consider shopping local this year to support their own communities and help maintain a vibrant buzz along main streets. With only days of shopping to go, ISME is reminding consumers that every €1 spent locally on their Christmas shop could generate up to €4 in their community.

Shopping locally for goods and services returns multiples of the customers spend back to the community and helps local businesses maintain jobs in Irish towns and villages.

ISME is urging customers to ensure that they devote a proportion of their Christmas shopping to local bricks-and-mortar or 'Irish' online stores, leaving only those hard-to-find gifts that can't be sourced elsewhere to be purchased from larger multinational companies.

Neil McDonnell, Chief Executive at ISME, said: "We are hoping that consumers in Wicklow will bring some Christmas cheer to Irish retailers this year and decide to shop locally. By consciously choosing to buy locally, even a portion of our purchases can have a meaningful impact, as each euro spent locally can generate two, three, or even four times its value in community wealth. This Christmas, we must take the opportunity to support local retailers and hospitality providers. Making these choices can even lead to time, money, and effort being saved and can even reduce our environmental footprint by keep-



ISME Chief Executive Neil McDonnell (Left) pictured with ISME President Marc O'Dwyer (Right).

ing some of our festive spending close to home." To help people make local choices this Christmas, ISME has created two online portals - one for consumers and one for businesses. Consumers can browse a variety of categories such as activities and entertainment, fashion, food and drink, retail, and Irish breaks which offers gift ideas for Christmas and showcases local businesses.

Laurence Pierce
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Castle Street, Bray. Tel: 01 286 5755 www.fourstarpizza.ie



Delilah Whelan with Santa at the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Avoca.

Happy Christmas
and a Peaceful & Healthy New Year
to all our Readers,
Customers & Friends from
all at

LOCAL Wicklow Times

Bray's newest school welcomes delegation from Chinese university

Ireland-China Education College (ICEC) which was only founded in September, welcomed a high level delegation from Hebei University (HBU) on Sunday 8th December. Hebei is a province next to Beijing.



Philip O'Reilly, Deputy Principal of ICEC, speaking at the event.

ICEC is a not-for-profit school founded to promote intercultural exchange between the Chinese community in Ireland and the local community. It does this through to providing classes in language, dance and art in a fun and relaxed environment which encourages the students to interact with each other. ICEC was the brainchild of Linda Zhao and Tony Jie. Linda has carried out extensive research into the teaching of Mandarin Chinese as a second language in many countries around the globe.

It provides Mandarin language classes at all levels from beginner (suitable for children as young as 8 years old) up to Leaving Cert Mandarin and also Mandarin for adults. Many students in Ireland may not realise that they can take Mandarin in the Leaving Cert.

ICEC's teaching staff consists of highly qualified teachers with expertise in their respective fields.

While the school started without any fanfare in September, it already has 72 local children enrolled in its classes. These students come from both families where one or both parents are Chinese and Irish families where the children want to explore the Mandarin language.

All classes are run on Sundays in Loreto Secondary School. By being facilitated by Loreto, ICEC does not have to manage premises and can focus entirely on the education ele-

ments and deliver enhanced support to students from diverse cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. Committed to fostering cross-cultural understanding, ICEC actively contributes to the educational diversity of the local community. On Sunday December 8th the school was visited by the President of Hebei University, Professor Meng Qing Yu, together with Professor Xing Hui Bin, Professor Yang Wen Jie, Professor Lyn Yi, and Professor Li Hai Feng.

ICEC teachers, parents and students held a warm welcome ceremony and engaged in extensive discussions and exchanged views on several topics, including local Chinese language education, teacher training, curriculum development, teaching and research, and short-term training programs for primary and secondary school students.

A formal cooperation agreement was signed during the visit, marking a new milestone in collaboration between Hebei University and ICEC. The two institutions will work hand in hand to promote educational and cultural exchanges between Ireland and China, enhance Chinese language education in Ireland, and provide Irish youth with more educational opportunities.

In his speech, Philip O'Reilly, Deputy principal of ICEC, remarked, "The Irish government places great importance on Chinese language

education. In 2015, it announced that it planned to include Chinese as an examination subject in the Irish Leaving Certificate. By 2022, this was implemented, and Chinese was included in this most important examination. However, the growing demand for Chinese language education has highlighted a significant shortage of qualified Chinese language teachers in primary and secondary schools, as well as gaps in teaching standards, assessment methods, and instructional approaches.

ICEC was established to address these challenges. By combining frontline teaching with curriculum development and research, ICEC has positioned itself as a leader in this field. Its potential for future development is truly immeasurable.

"Looking to the future, ICEC has an ambitious vision to establish the first Chinese-English bilingual school in Ireland, where both Mandarin Chinese and English would be mandatory languages. This model is inspired by existing bilingual schools in Ireland, such as the German and Spanish schools. We believe this will serve as a significant milestone in promoting cultural exchange and linguistic diversity.

For centuries, Irish people have migrated to many parts of the world. They brought their culture with them and as they integrated, we like to think that their Irish

culture enriched the culture of their chosen new homelands. In recent decades it is a delight for us to see so many other nationalities choose Ireland as their new homeland - no more so than the growing Chinese community. We look forward to their cultures enriching ours. It is the mission of ICEC to play its part in helping both cultures mix and enrich each other."



Philip O'Reilly - Deputy principal of ICEC, and Prof. Meng Qingyu - President of Hebei University.



Pictured (back row, L-R) are the delegates from Hebei University, Prof. Li Haifeng - Director of Computing Research Center of Hebei University, Prof. Xing Huibin - Director of International Office of Hebei University, Prof. Meng Qingyu - President of Hebei University, Prof. Lyn Yi - Dean of School of Media and Creation of Hebei University and Prof. Yang Wenjie - Dean of School of Management of Hebei University; and (front row, L-R) students Casey Lin, Sophie Wiesner, Eimear Manning, Beibei Chen, and Ruishan Gao.

Tributes paid to Bray's Gemma Hussey

'She cared for women, she cared for Bray and she cared for Wicklow'

The death of Gemma Hussey has brought the heady days of 1980s Irish politics momentarily to the fore, during the final days of the 2024 general election campaign. Gemma was a mould breaker, an advocate for women in public life, particularly politics and broadcasting to name but two areas. Though Ireland's fourth female government minister, after Constance Markievicz (1919), Máire Geoghegan-Quinn (1979), and Eileen Desmond (1981), Gemma Hussey was Ireland's first female Minister for Education as well as being Fine Gael's first woman government minister.

Gemma was Bray born, the daughter of New Ross chemist James Moran, who ran a pharmacy on the Quinsborough Road, Bray and Dundrum born Patricia Rogan, daughter of a county Down born publican and a Rathfarnham national school teacher mother. Gemma grew up in Knockrath, Herbert Road, Bray before the family moved to the nearby St George's, Herbert Road, Bray. She attended Miss Lucie Brayden's St Brigid's School, and then the St Columba's Loreto Convent School (IBVM), Bray, before boarding at the Sacred Heart Convent School (RSCJ), Mount Anville, though it was just 8 miles from home in Bray. While at school Gemma admired the nuns. She attended UCD, where she graduated in 1960 with a degree in Economics & Political Science having started studying French & Spanish.

At school she was not considered the most conformist of students. She claims that she was always in trouble and resorted to mislaying her school reports. They always said "must" or "could work harder". She was poor at Irish and maths but remembered enjoying French. The late Mary O'Rourke née Lenihan, former Fianna Fáil TD for Longford-Westmeath and Minister for Education, was a contemporary of Gemma's at Loreto,

Bray. One year, the school sisters, unimpressed with the calibre of student in Gemma and Mary O'Rourke's year, chose the prefect for their class from the year below, to the chagrin of the class. Some have questioned the wisdom in this considering that both women were to go on to serve as Ministers of Education. Others have speculated that this was a turning point precipitated by the Loreto nuns.

Active in the early years of the Bray Sailing Club, an au pair in her youth, in 1963 with Maureen Concannon, Gemma established English Language Studies Institute, an English language school which also located and placed au pairs at home and abroad. In 1967 Gemma married St Mary's College (C.S.Sp.) 1958 Leinster Senior Cup winning schoolboy team member Derry Hussey, later setting up house at Rostellan, 29, Temple Road, Dartry, Dublin 6.

With the co-founding of the Women's Political Association (WPA) Gemma entered the political world. Gemma, along with Nuala Fennell, Audrey Conlon, Hilary Pratt and Phil Moore had founded the association to influence public opinion on the importance of gender balance amongst public representatives, to pressurise political parties and to encourage women to run for elec-

tion. The more radical elements of the Irish feminist movement came to view the Women's Political Association (WPA) as representing the more affluent women in the women's movement. Gemma's political ideology might best be described as one newspaper described her as "heavyweight Blueshirt liberal".

Gemma's connections with Fine Gael were long held and familial. War of Independence hero, Cumann na nGaedheal and Fine Gael founding member, Government Minister and two-times Presidential election candidate, General Seán Mac Eoin T.D., 'The Blacksmith of Ballinalee' was a distant cousin on her mother's Rogan side. This thus also connected her to Paddy Cooney T.D. with whom she served in cabinet, and was Gemma's immediate successor as Fine Gael Minister for Education. Gemma's husband Derry Hussey had been involved with Fine Gael since at least 1973 and later became chair of the Fine Gael Dublin South-East constituency executive, Garret Fitzgerald's own constituency, with whom Gemma and Derry were close personal friends. As was the norm with the University Seanad Éireann constituencies, Gemma was elected as an 'Independent' senator, sitting in the Fine Gael benches and later former-



Education Minister Gemma Hussey TD with Rev. Sr. Eileen Doyle RSC.

ly joining Fine Gael, becoming Fine Gael leader in Seanad Éireann. Derry was the chair in the early 1980s of the Fine Gael Strategy Committee which masterminded the change in Fine Gael fortunes under the Fine Gael leadership of Garret Fitzgerald, ultimately bringing Fine Gael electoral success. Another distant cousin of Gemma's is John McMenamin who also served on this strategy committee, later becoming a Supreme Court Judge.

In latter years, Gemma was seen around Bray pushing her mother in a wheelchair, showing tremendous care for her mother who had lived with Alzheimer's disease for over a decade before she died.

Cllr. Malachai Duddy who pro-

posed a vote of sympathy at the recent December meeting of Bray Municipal District remembers Gemma best as being "Caring: Caring for women, Caring for Bray and Caring for county Wicklow. I am sure I am joined by the people of Bray in extending my deepest condolences to Gemma's brother Paddy Moran, her children Rachel, Ruth and Andrew, her grandchildren as well as to the extended Moran, Rogan and Hussey families: Solas Mhic Dé ar a n-anam."

An Taoiseach Simon Harris TD and Fine Gael leader paid tribute to Gemma Hussey saying that "it is with profound sadness that we in Fine Gael mark the death of our friend and colleague, Gemma

Hussey. Gemma was a trailblazer, the state's first female Minister for Education and Fine Gael's first female Cabinet minister. Gemma was a passionate progressive for woman's rights, education reform and Ireland's place in the world, particularly the potential of European Union membership. Gemma was a TD for my own native Wicklow, where her long service and delivery is remembered to this day. But above all Gemma was a patriot, a Fine Gael stalwart and a kind and generous person. I was one of the people lucky to enjoy her company, her advice and her good humour. To all of her family, colleagues and friends, I am truly sorry for your loss. May she rest in peace."



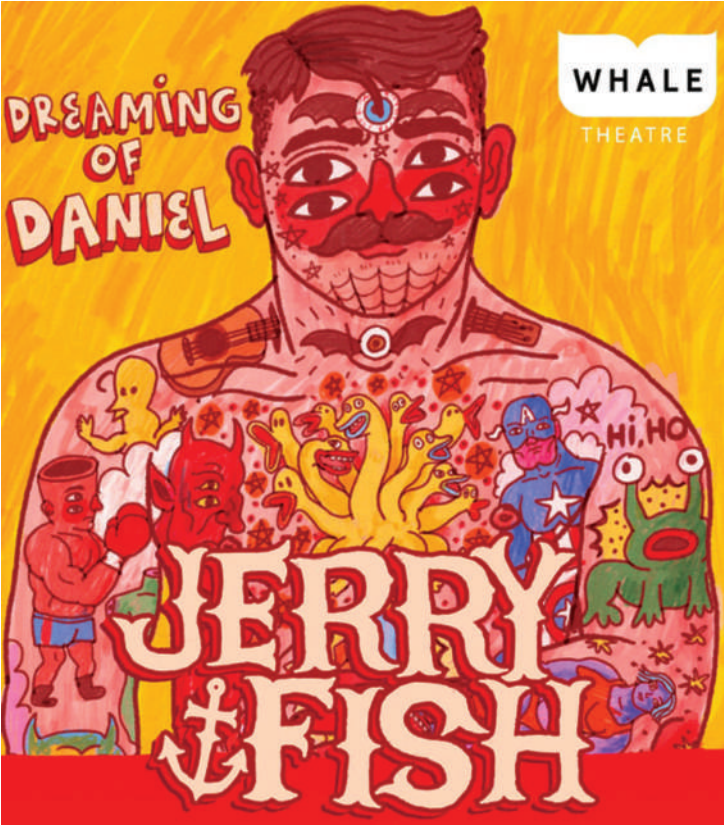
Bernie Ivers and Carol Coad at the official launch of the Natura Woodland Play Area recently in Kilmagig, Avoca.

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Jerry Fish - Dreaming of Daniel Album Tour

*Whale Theatre, Saturday 21st December, 8pm (doors 7pm)
Sold out but register at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for returns.*

The new album entitled 'Dreaming of Daniel' feat. MayKay (Fight Like Apes) is a labour of love for Jerry. Featuring songs by the late, great Daniel Johnston. Scheduled for release in November 2024.

Jerry explains: "I felt compelled to record and release an album of Daniel's work, not alone is his lyrical wit and honesty an inspiration to me and a multitude of artists the world over, we have so much fun performing his songs live. The album 'Dreaming of Daniel' captures the joy we experience on stage performing Daniel's songs, it's infectious."

Jerry Fish is one of Ireland's most enigmatic and entertaining performers with his now legendary live shows, a unique live theatrical experience that dissolves all boundaries between performer and audience.

Jerry Fish blasted onto the Music Scene in the 1990's touring the globe as front-man of alternative rock outfit An Emotional Fish, the band who gave us the indie rock anthem "Celebrate". These days the name Jerry Fish is synonymous with Festivals, Carnival

Sideshow, Circus and Theatre. Jerry has curated and run his own Circus tent and area; The Jerry Fish Electric Sideshow in Fish Town at Ireland's biggest music and arts festival Electric Picnic for the last 12 years.

"Our live performances are a mix of music, theatre and the spirit of the carnival," says Jerry "Wherever I go, the circus is never far behind." A true carnival creator,

"I am from a long line of clowns and the first to realise it" Jerry's a natural all-around entertainer; musician, storyteller, dramatist, poet and comic.

This winter, join Jerry Fish as he embarks on the Dreaming of Daniel album tour. Performing songs from the new album, alongside a selection of his greatest hits, in a celebration of his unique artistry and the life of one of Ireland's greatest showmen.

BUSY STREETS

A poem by Barbara Murphy

Busy streets, twinkling lights, shops lit up, music playing,
Footsteps getting closer and then fading away, running,
walking,
Friends chatting as they hurry along, all she can see is
their shoes,
High heels, low heels, boots, runners. Coats of green, red
and blue,
like the tinsel on the Christmas tree all those years ago,
The smell of the Christmas cake her mother used to make;

She wonders how she got to this place,
A buggy being wheeled by, children laughing; every per-
son with somewhere to go,
The jingling of coins as a man stops, bends down,
A kindly face, a friendly smile.
"A thank you God bless" and he is gone.
Walking through the busy streets, cup in hand,
she pockets the coins.

Christmas cinema at Mermaid

It's a Wonderful Life

Monday 23rd December
€10 Full Price /
€8 Concession Price
Duration: 129 mins



This moving and beautifully told film is a true masterpiece of cinema. A tale of rivalry and despair at thirty, the story finds George Bailey (James Stewart) in turmoil, having been framed by his arch rival, torn between his own desires and aspirations, but struggling to always do the right thing. This inner conflict proves too much for Bailey, who sees suicide as the only option. In classic Hollywood style, Heaven sends a guardian angel to remind him how worthwhile his life has been and to treasure the good times when the going gets tough.

Director: Frank Capra Starring: James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, Thomas Mitchell, Henry Travers

The Muppets' Christmas Carol

Saturday 21st December. €10 Full Price / €8 Concession Price / €5 Child Price. Duration: 89 mins

Michael Caine plays the old miser Scrooge with Kermit as his long-suffering but ever-hopeful employee Bob Cratchit, Miss Piggy as Cratchit's wife, and a host of Muppets (including the Great Gonzo as an unlikely Charles Dickens) taking other primary roles in this bright, playful adaptation of the sombre tale. Or at least it starts brightly enough--the anarchic humour soon settles into mirthful memories and a sense of melancholy as the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future take Scrooge on a journey of his lonely, wasted life. Michael Caine makes a wonderful Scrooge, delightfully rediscovering the meaning of life as fantastic creations from Henson's Creature Shop (developed specially for this film) take the reins as the three ghosts. While the odd mix of offbeat humour and drama undercuts the power of Dickens's drama, this kid-friendly retelling makes an excellent family drama that adults and children alike can enjoy.

Brian Henson directs his late father's creations in the Charles Dickens classic, the best known (and most oft-filmed) Christmas story of all time.



Portrait of Louis Armstrong by local Wicklow artist Sean Kavanagh, whose new exhibition opened in Wicklow Town library on Thursday 5th December.

De Valera's Christmas in Greystones

New book highlights Dev's connection with the county

County Wicklow author Colum Kenny has written a new book about the character and early development of Éamon de Valera.

After 1916, de Valera sent his wife Sinéad and their children to live in 'Craig Leath', a fine house on Kinlen Road in the exclusive and very unionist Burnaby district of Greystones. They remained there until 1922. When Dev was interned in 1918 she wrote "This is a beautiful place and so healthy for the children."

But as Kenny indicates in *Dangerous Ambition: The Making of Éamon de Valera* (Eastwood Books, €20), Dev was often not there. Sinéad managed alone for most of the War of Independence when he was in the United States, and she later wrote to thank Michael Collins for his support during that period.

Returning to Ireland, de Valera spent many nights at houses in Dublin. Around Christmas 1921, when he was

embroiled in bitter debate about the proposed Anglo-Irish Treaty, his wife complained that their housemaid in Greystones "had and has a very sore finger and I had everything to see to". She added "The rush to Xmas was awful and for the once that Dev was at home with us the place was filthy and not too comfortable."

Most biographies of Dev have concentrated on his later political career but this volume looks at how his character was formed before he founded Fianna Fáil in 1926. Dev managed to pull himself up by his bootstraps as the son of a distant mother who had emigrated to New York. She sent him aged two and a half in 1885 to be raised by her brother Pat Coll outside Bruree village in Co. Limerick.

Eddie's Uncle Pat lived in one of the first "labourers' cottages" built. For he was a labourer as his own father had also been. He reared Eddie Coll (as Dev was then often known) to work hard.

Dev was a solitary child who learnt to depend on his own abilities to get ahead, and to get his way: "I had no one to play with. I was alone a good deal. In the river I had a little island, and I used to shape it and make plans about it. This was Ireland and I was the ruler of it."

In 1926 de Valera founded Fianna Fáil, today once again the biggest political party in Dáil Éireann. But what got him there? His was a story of stark rearing and thwarted ambitions.

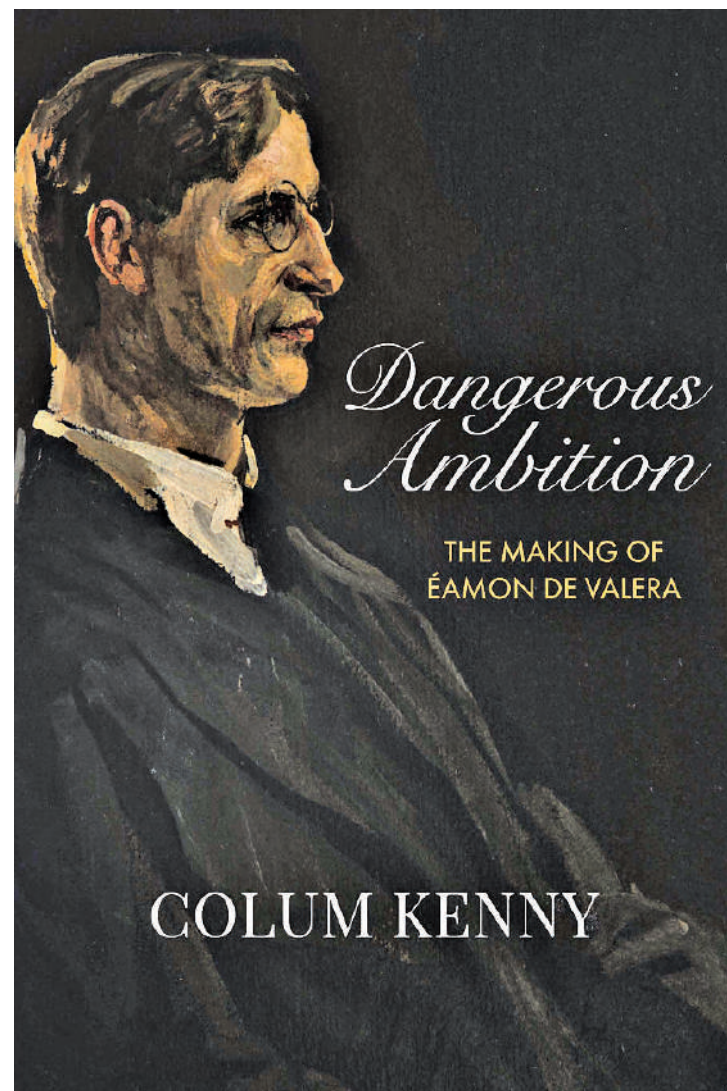
He was determined to get an education, winning scholarships that got him into the prestigious Blackrock College in Dublin and saw him graduate from the Royal University of Ireland - rare achievements especially then for a boy of his

social class.

Dev never knew his father, who was reputedly of Spanish origin. Kenny, a professor emeritus of Dublin City University and senior journalist who has lived in Bray since the 1970s, recently gave an address at the University of Toledo in Spain about de Valera's use of at least three Irish ambassadors in Madrid in his futile search for roots in Spain.

Dangerous Ambition is the last in a quartet of recent books by Kenny. In these he challenges our views of aspects of the 'Irish Revolution' of 1916 to 1922. The quartet consists of full-length biographies of both Arthur Griffith and Éamon de Valera, along with two succinct volumes reviewing the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations of 1921 and the Irish Civil War that followed them.

Published by Eastwood Books, Kenny's study is aimed at both general and academic readers.



The Ennio Morricone Experience at Mermaid

Remembering the Master through his most beautiful film scores

Mermaid Arts Centre, Friday 17th January, 8pm. €28.50. Duration: 2 hours approx (including interval). For accessible / wheelchair seats contact the Box Office on 01 272 4030

The Ennio Morricone Experience is a tribute to the late maestro of film music who wrote over 400 film compositions in his lifetime, including the scores for audience favourites *A Fistful of Dollars*, *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*, *Cinema Paradiso*, and *The Mission*.

The ensemble comprises acclaimed solo international artists residing in Ireland. These include Dundalk locals Annemarie McGahon (viola), Francesca De Nardi (violin), Davide Forti (cello) and Annalisa Monticelli (piano) and Dubliners Katy Kelly (soprano) and Morgan Crowley (tenor).

The Italian maestro left an indelible mark on music and cinema alike.

Born in Rome in 1928, Morricone's early years were steeped in classical music. A graduate of the prestigious Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, he mastered both the trumpet and composition.

However, it was his innovative spirit - his ability to blend classical traditions with experimental techniques - that would come to define his career.

The 1960s brought a seismic shift in Morricone's career, thanks to his partnership with director Sergio Leone. Together, they reinvented the Western genre with *A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More*, and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Morricone's scores were unlike anything audiences had heard before - whistling, gunshots, cracking whips, and

even the human voice became instruments in his orchestral arsenal.

While Morricone's name became synonymous with the Western, his work extended far beyond the genre. He collaborated with directors like Bernardo Bertolucci (1900), Brian De Palma (*The Untouchables*), and Giuseppe Tornatore (*Cinema Paradiso*). Each score showcased his uncanny ability to amplify a film's emotional core.

Italian giallo films, with their lurid visuals, mysterious plots, and violent crescendos, demanded soundtracks as bold and unsettling as their imagery. Morricone rose to the challenge, crafting music that combined eerie beauty with visceral tension. His scores often blurred the lines between melody and noise, turning the familiar into something hauntingly alien. Morricone's collaborations with Dario Argento, in particular, became a hallmark of the giallo genre. His score for *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, which marked Argento's directorial debut, is a masterpiece of controlled unease.

His music for *The Mission*, often cited as one of the greatest film scores of all time, combines choir, orchestra, and indigenous instruments to stunning effect. The piece Gabriel's Oboe captures the film's spiri-

tual essence with such poignancy that it has found a life of its own in concert halls and weddings around the world.

Ennio Morricone once

said, "Music is a reflection of the soul." Through his work, he bared his own soul to the world, offering us joy, sorrow, suspense, and awe in

equal measure. His scores continue to echo in our collective memory, as timeless as the films they accompany. For generations to come, when we

hear that first whistle or those swelling strings, we will remember a man who could make us feel every note, every beat, and every silence.



Rosa, Fionn and Sean Kavanagh at the opening of Sean's new portrait exhibition in Wicklow Town Library.

Wicklow schools urged to enter PEXpo '25

With the backing of sponsor Dare to Believe, the eleventh annual PEXpo will return to the National Indoor Arena in Abbottstown, Dublin on Thursday April 10, 2025 when second level students from all over Ireland will showcase their projects on topics relating to sport, health and physical fitness.

Although there's still plenty of time to get started on projects, schools who sign up before December 20 will get 15% off their entry fee. Closing date for entries is February 14, 2025. For the exhibition, students are invited to submit projects under one of eight broad headings: Nutrition and Diet; Olympic Ideals and Values, My favourite Olympian (first years only) and Personal Physical Activity Programme (2nd Year CBA).



Overall winners of PEXpo '24 - Molly Collins, Aoife O'Keefe and Faithleann Sommers from St Brigid's Presentation School, Killarney.

Special prizes also go to winners in eight further categories, among them Best New School, Best Project in Irish, Women in Sport and Sport for Business.

In 2025, for the first time, Dare to Believe PEXpo is an official Gaisce Challenge partner.

At last year's PEXpo, Aoife O'Keefe, Molly Collins and, Faithleann Sommers from St Brigid's Presentation School, Killarney took the top senior award for a project called 'Sport Behind Bars'. Entries had come from all four provinces for the first time.

As well as Dare to Believe and the Physical Education Association of Ireland, other supporters of PEXpo include Sport Ireland, Active Cities, Dublin City Sport and



Alyssa Griffin and Stella Quinn at the switching on of the Christmas Treetop night lights in Avondale.

Wellbeing, South Dublin County Sport Partnership, Sport for Business, Leave No Trace, School Fitness Ireland and HerMoves.

To register projects, see the website at www.pexpoireland.com. For further information, contact Paddy O'Reilly at 086 1743836.

Wicklow schools invited to compete for 'Ireland's fittest' title

A call has gone out to schools in Wicklow, and elsewhere across the country, from one of Ireland's best-known Olympians, sprinter David Gillick who has joined forces with Fyffes once again in a quest to find 'Ireland's Fittest School 2025'.

Aimed at promoting the importance of exercise, fitness and healthy eating amongst young people, a central feature of the programme will be a series of exercise routines - recorded by Gillick, alongside Irish fitness trainer, Sharon Flanagan - which competing schools can adopt as

part of their PE curriculum and against which performance will be measured and tracked online.

Running for 10 weeks from January 20th, the

upcoming competition will see a new element introduced in which the top four schools from each province will compete head-to-head across four live regional qualifier events in April. The top

school from Connacht, Leinster, Munster and Ulster will then progress to May's grand final at which the prize package will include €8,000 worth of sports equipment.

Previous 'Ireland's Fittest School' winners were Donegal's Scoil Na Croise Naofa, Dunfanaghy (2022); Meath's Gilson National School, Oldcastle (2023) and Waterford's Toura-neena National School (2024). School registrations open January 6th and further details can be found online at www.fyffes-fittestschool.ie



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I Marc Nichols seek a change of use planning permission from commercial office back to a residential dwelling. The development will consist of a new private amenity garden bin store, fencing and together with all associated site development works at Kilmartin Hill, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow, A67 ND90. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Noel Heatley and Chris Dunne seek a change of use planning permission from commercial office back to a residential dwelling. The development will consist of modification to the front (South Elevation) to remove the shopfront, signage, and lighting, and add 2 No. windows at street level. Alterations to rear (North Elevation) including increasing the width of the existing lower ground floor door, and upper ground floor/first floor window openings. Together with all associated site development works at No. 15, The Mall, Main Street, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow.

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



The death has occurred of Alexander (Sandy) Delaney

Formerly of Marston Moretaine, Luton and Ballykippogue Kilbride Co Wicklow Ireland

Sandy passed away peacefully, at home, in his 85th year on the 4th December 2024

He will be deeply missed by his devoted wife Martha, daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Funeral Service will take place at the Sacred Heart Church, Flitwick Bedfordshire England MK45 1JP on Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 10.00am

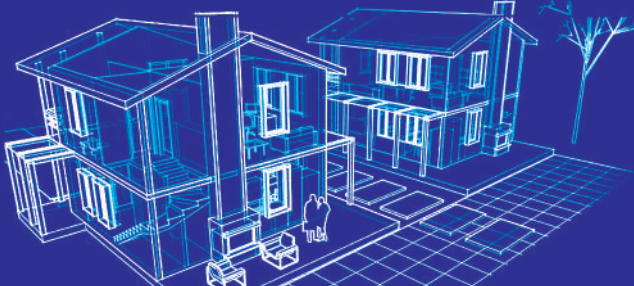
Rest in Peace

Enquiries to Neville Funeral Services, Flitwick Road Ampthill, Bedfordshire MK45 2NT

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Business women celebrate at event to mark 10 years of ACORNS



Louise Jones, Sinead Brady, Anne Reilly (Lead entrepreneur), and Caitriona Cullen. Pic Orla Murray.

Businesswomen from across the country came together in Mullingar this month to mark the 10th anniversary of ACORNS, the award-winning business development programme for early-stage female entrepreneurs from rural areas.

Representing Wicklow at the event was Louise Jones of Simpson Jones: Administrators for Barristers, which is based in Blessington. Hosted at Bloomfield House Hotel in Mullingar, the event was one of a series of regional gatherings designed by ACORNS to help former participants network with peers from different cycles. The events aim to help participants broaden their networks, do business with each other, focus on their

development goals and exchange ideas on overcoming business challenges.

The invitation was open to former ACORNS participants from the region and leading the discussion was ACORNS Director Paula Fitzsimons and some of the programme's voluntary Lead Entrepreneurs - Alison Ritchie, Man-

aging Director of Polar Ice, Eimer Hannon, Managing Director of Hannon Travel and Anne Reilly, founder of Paycheck Plus.

ACORNS is a free initiative for early-stage female entrepreneurs based in rural Ireland. It has been running since 2014 and is funded through the Rural Innovation and Develop-

ment Fund by the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM).

ACORNS 10 is now underway. 56 early stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland have been selected to participate. The new cycle got underway with a residential Launch Forum on October 21/22.

Local business supports Bia Food Initiative

Eolas Recruitment has made a significant contribution to the community by providing funding to the Bray & North Wicklow Area Partnership (BNWAP) Bia Food Initiative for 2024. This funding has already made a meaningful impact, supporting local families and community groups working to alleviate food poverty in the Bray & North Wicklow area.



Jim Ryan, Managing Director of Eolas Recruitment, recently visited the BNWAP Bia project to meet with community groups and project staff. During his visit, he witnessed the difference this support is making, ensuring that up to 70 families and multiple community projects assisting homeless individuals receive food every week.

The funding from Eolas Recruitment has been used to supplement the food provided through BNWAP's FoodCloud membership network. This additional support means families now receive ingredients for basic meals, bringing much-needed relief to those facing food insecurity.

The Bia Food Initiative plays a crucial role in addressing food poverty in the local area. Surplus food is sourced through FoodCloud, which delivers excess super-

market food to the Bia centre for redistribution. Partnerships with groups like WH Five Loaves, Sugarloaf Lions Club, and Extern ensure the food reaches those who need it most.

Speaking about the initiative, Michael Byrne of BNWAP said: "Eolas Recruitment's generosity has made a real and ongoing difference to people in need in our community. We're incredibly grateful for their support and commitment to helping us tackle food poverty."

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. M.C.

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

GOSPEL Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand. Watch yourselves or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

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New Art Gallery by Kally

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All original oil paintings by Kally Stefanazzi. Professional Irish artist & interior designer, second generation Italian, fabulous contemporary seascapes.

Enquiries welcome to 086 210 4380

Gallery opening 3rd December.

@visualartistkally

McMullans of Arklow

Christmas Opening Hours:

Sat 14th 9:30am-6pm	Sat 21st 9:30am-6pm
Sun 15th 10am-5pm	Sun 22nd 9:30am-5pm
Mon 16th 9:30am-6pm	Mon 23rd 9:30am-6pm
Tues 17th 9:30am-6pm	Tues 24th 9am-4pm
Wed 18th 9:30am-6pm	
Thurs 19th 9:30am-6pm	
Fri 20th 9:30am-6pm	

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Have a GREEN CHRISTMAS

This Festive Season

RECYCLING for December & January



CHRISTMAS TREE SHREDDING 2025

NO WREATHS, PLASTIC TREES OR DECORATIONS PLEASE

Town	Location	Collection Dates	Operating Times Weekdays
Arklow	Arklow Recycling Centre, Croghan Industrial Estate, Emoclew Road, Arklow	3rd to 18th January 2025	During Normal Recycling Centre Opening Hours
Bray	Bray Recycling Centre, Beechwood Close, Boghall Road, Bray	3rd to 18th January 2025	During Normal Recycling Centre Opening Hours
Baltinglass	Rampere Recycling Centre, Rampere Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow	3rd to 18th January 2025	During Normal Recycling Centre Opening Hours
Wicklow	The Murrough Recycling Centre Wicklow	3rd to 18th January 2025	During Normal Recycling Centre Opening Hours
Avoca	Avoca Recycling Centre Boghall Road, Bray	3rd to 18th January 2025	During Normal Recycling Centre Opening Hours
Blessington	County Council Yard, Naas Road	3rd to 18th January 2025	Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm
Greystones	Carpark to front of the Council Offices on Mill Road near to the bottle banks	3rd to 18th January 2025	Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

The Christmas tree collection service is a free service for households (domestic) only. One tree per household/vehicle will be accepted.

No commercial collectors. Litter fines will be issued to those depositing trees outside the times specified and to individuals or other entities operating unauthorised collections.



CHRISTMAS 2024 / 2025

Opening & Closing Times Wicklow County Council Recycling Centres

	Arklow	Avoca	Bray	Wicklow Town	Rampere, Baltinglass
Monday 23rd December	9am - 4:30pm	Closed	9am - 4pm	9am - 4.30pm (closed for lunch 1pm - 1.45pm)	8.30am - 4pm
Tuesday 24th December Christmas Eve	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Wednesday 25th December Christmas Day	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Thursday 26th December St Stephen's Day	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday 27th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Saturday 28th December	9am - 1.45pm	9am - 1.45pm	9am - 1.45pm	9am - 1.45pm	8.30am - 1pm
Sunday 29th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday 30th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	8.30am - 4pm
Tuesday 31st December New Year's Eve	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	8.30am - 1pm
Wednesday 1st January New year's Day	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Thursday 2nd January	9am - 4:30pm	9am - 4pm (closed for lunch 1pm - 2pm)	9am - 4pm	9am - 4.30pm (closed for lunch 1pm - 1.45pm)	8.30am - 4pm

HOW ARE YOU LEAVING YOUR MARK?

BEWARE OF UNLICENSED WASTE COLLECTORS

"PLAN YOUR FESTIVE FOOD" TO AVOID FOOD WASTE THIS CHRISTMAS

Planning your festive food can help you avoid food waste and reduce stress and hassle while shopping for food and cooking over the Christmas season.

1. Planning your Christmas menu – it's never too late to start
2. Stick to your Christmas shopping list – only buy what you need
3. Store your Christmas food properly – make the most of it
4. Cooking enough Christmas fare – give family-style serving a go
5. Amazing festive leftovers – can save you time and money

More information at www.stopfoodwaste.ie

