

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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Tuesday 25th February 2025 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

'WICKLOW, THE POOR RELATION'

Social Democrats TD, Jennifer Whitmore, has called for immediate action to address the inadequate funding allocated to Wicklow County Council for road improvements, emphasizing the need for fair distribution of resources to ensure road safety and infrastructure development.

"It is clear that Wicklow has been left behind once again. Despite our larger size and growing population, we have been allocated only €3 million more than Louth. The current state of our infrastructure poses significant safety risks to residents and commuters and this funding is simply not enough to address the pressing issues we face."

"Wicklow County Council has been allocated

a total of €15 million for improving and maintaining local and regional roads. To put this into perspective, counties like Donegal and Tipperary, with smaller populations, have been allocated around €42 million each.

"Additionally, Wicklow was allocated only €461,100 for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Works, whereas Tipperary and Donegal received

€938,490 and €935,000, respectively."

This funding announcement comes after Deputy Whitmore's recent complaints about road safety in Wicklow, highlighting the ongoing struggle for adequate resources to ensure the safety and well-being of residents.

Independent councillor, Joe Behan was also critical of the funding for County Wicklow: "The recent announcement of



Music tutor Deirdre Naidoo pictured during rehearsals with Session 55 in Ashford Heritage Centre last Friday. The music group project is for people aged 55 and over. Pic: Michael Kelly.

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roads funding to all of the counties of Ireland is proof that we are the poor relation when it comes to this type of funding and calls into question the quality of input being made into these decisions by Government TD's especially the Tanaiste, Simon Harris TD.

"The figures reveal glaring anomalies between County Wicklow and our neighbours in Wexford, Meath and Kildare. Wicklow County Council received total funding for non-national roads projects of €15 million. Wexford County Council received a staggering €23 million, while Meath received €26 million, and Kildare received €20 million. We were even outshone by counties with smaller populations such as Offaly (€17 million), Roscommon (€23 million) and Sligo (€19 million). It is extremely hard to accept that County

Wicklow whose people are subject to extremely high and unfair property taxes and whose roads are highly trafficked with commercial, agricultural and forestry traffic should only merit a similar amount to the tiny county of Leitrim which received more than €14 million. I would be very interested to know if the Government representatives did any detailed work on ensuring that County Wicklow would even get its fair share of funding. I am not even asking for more than comparative counties. I am only asking for fairness which does not seem to be what happened.

"The most eye-watering haul in the whole list is the money received by County Tipperary, which received a whopping €42 million. Is this the first fruits of the deal done by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael with their most notable supporter,

Michael Lowry TD? If he has negotiated a

sweet deal right under the nose of the Tanaiste whose constituents have

yet again been badly let down by this Government."

yet again been badly let down by this Government."

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European Union European Regional Development Fund

Arklow Active Retirement

Active Retirement Arklow weekly Social and Information Mornings have resumed.

Members meet every Friday from 11-12 in Arus Lorcáin, Castlepark, Arklow to catch up socially, hear a talk on issues of interest or register to go on a monthly day trip. On alternate Fridays they also enjoy a novel Card Bingo game or two or a "Twenty Questions" General Knowledge Quiz.

Some members enjoy Bowls from 2-4 on Monday afternoons. Others head off on Tuesday mornings for a leisurely walk. A monthly day trip takes place on Wednesdays and the first trip of the year will be to Malahide Castle and Demesne on 26th February.

Members' subscriptions are due now and new members are always welcome. Their 8 person Management Committee is looking forward to welcoming new members who can call in any Friday at 11 am to Arus Lorcáin or text them at 086 6047132. Annual subscription is 25 euro.

Local History Talk: 'Tales from a Wicklow Tea Room' by Michael Fewer

In his talk, 'Tales from a Wicklow Tea Room' (Wicklow Town Library Branch Thursday 27th February, 7pm) Michael Fewer shares the fascinating story of a small cottage and tea room located in Glencree, in the Wicklow Mountains. Three successive generations of Mrs. McGuirk welcomed visitors to the tea room from 1898 to 1960. During this pivotal era in Irish history, the tea room became a gathering place for poets, artists, writers, scientists, politicians, and lawyers, many of whom signing the visitors' book as they left.

While exploring these visitor books, Michael Fewer uncovered over 13,000 signatures, including those of some of the most influential figures of early 20th-century Ireland—each with their own unique story to tell. All are welcome. This event is free, however spaces are limited. To book call 0404 67025 or email Wicklowlocalstudies@wicklowcoco.ie

Community grants opportunity for north Wicklow

Community Foundation Ireland has announced a new grants opportunity for communities in north Wicklow. The energy company Neoen has established a solar farm at Millvale (west of Rathnew) and created a Community Benefit Fund to support local communities. Grants of up to €5,000 are available in an open grant round to charitable organisations operating within 10km of the solar farm.

To apply, please visit the Community Foundation Ireland website (www.community-foundation.ie) and click on the 'Apply for Funding' option. The Fund will support a range of community-focused projects. Note that the deadline to apply is fast approaching: Friday 7th March. If you have any questions or would like to know more, email info@foundation.ie

Grand Open Day to highlight new developments at BIFE

Bray Institute of Further Education, Irelands Premier College of Further Education is holding its re-scheduled grand open Day on Friday 28th Febuary between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm.

Consistently innovated and student-centered, BIFE has an outstanding selection of courses at various levels. Additionally, apart from industry links, BIFE has well-established links to Higher Education Universities, in Ireland and abroad. BIFE has developed, in association with IADT, a new degree programme in Business and Psychology this year. This is a four-year degree programme shared between BIFE and IADT.

The range of PLC courses at BIFE continues to expand. Courses are held in its main Campus on Novara Avenue, and also in its Campus at the Civic Centre which houses Film, Hairdressing and Early childhood courses and at its Florence Road centre where its Diploma in Music is taught.

An exciting aspect of studying at BIFE is the Erasmus + programme which is available to all

students, which allows them to travel to various European destinations for their work experience.

BIFE is developing links with Bray Wanderers Football Club and this year BIFE won the 3rd level Colleges Invitational Cup.

The New Year promises many developments at BIFE which was recently designated a Further Education College of the Future by An Taoiseach Simon Harris.

Greystones' Perfect Pooch 2025

Winner Big Mac Gets His Framed Cert



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

There can only be one winner though, and this year, it was the mighty Big Mac and his happy pets, Ciara and Ryan, who got the most votes.

With part of the win-

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

"Greystones is a town that's seems to be about fifty percent dogs and fifty percent coffee," laughs Fernanda, "so, we're very proud to be associated with this annual search. It's an almost impossible task picking the very best dog, given that every dog we meet is wonderful..."

For 2025, there were over 100 entries to the long-running Me & My Pooch competition, which is sponsored by local eco heating suppliers Glenergy. For founder Jonathan Leonard, being part of the competition each year "is a bit of fun, and it reminds people just how wonderful dogs are..."

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

International Women's Day breakfast celebration

Women of Faith group is organising an International Women's Day 'Breakfast Gathering' on March 7th, at 10.30am in Kilian House Family Centre in Greystones.

The event is open to everyone and aims to address the theme of equality through peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

The theme of the event highlights the importance of peace and reconciliation as prerequisites for achieving equality. This year the emphasis is on the significant impact of war on women's lives, and we know how often they bear the brunt of the aftermath, trying to rebuild their lives and support their families in challenging and difficult circumstances.

Keynote speakers at the event include Patricia Coyle, Director of Communications for the Irish Jesuits as well as an award winning journalist, and Fr. Damien Farnon, Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces and based in McKee Barracks, Dublin.

Pat Coyle will share insights from her background in philosophy, journalism, and spiritual leadership and it's meaning for everyday life, while Fr. Damien Farnon will discuss his experiences on two overseas missions with the Defence Forces and the role of chaplaincy in providing moral, pastoral, and practical support.

The morning will include discussion on various aspects of equality, including understanding the experiences and struggles of others, embracing our roles as peacekeepers, and living our lives better through faith. The event will also explore how faith can play a role in promoting peace and reconciliation.

The event aims to celebrate the resilience and contributions of women, encouraging attendees to reflect on how they can contribute to a more equal and peaceful world. As places are limited, please contact Kilian Centre @ 01 287 4025 or email an expression of interest to: womenoffaith@gkpastoralarea.ie

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Niamh Shirran and Des Burton at the Garden County GAA Awards in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

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'BETRAYAL'

Vital Aircoach service to Bray and Greystones to be axed

Aircoach last week announced a number of changes to their services which will see route 702 no longer serving Loughlinstown, Shankill, Bray or Greystones.

From March 2nd, Route 702 will only operate between Dublin Airport and Dalkey, serving the 3 Arena, Ballsbridge, St Vincent's Hospital, Booterstown, Monkstown, Dun Laoghaire and Dalkey via the Port Tunnel.

In a statement, Aircoach said the decision follows a comprehensive review of the company's route performance. The changes will take effect from 00:01am on Sunday, March 2nd.

"The review analysed customer demand and service levels across Aircoach's Dublin routes. These changes are being made to better align service offering to customer demand in a way that best fulfils Aircoach's mission of providing quick, reliable, and frequent services for customers travelling to and from Dublin Airport," the company stated.

"These changes are being made to maintain and enhance Aircoach's services where the greatest demand is, and to improve the punctuality and reliability of services."

Aircoach Managing Director Kim Swan, said "The Bray and Greystones section of our 702 route has been experiencing low and declining passenger numbers in recent years, and is currently not viable. Average passenger numbers for our discontinued stops are now in the low single digits. Journey times had increased due to traffic congestion, and our service became less attractive than alternatives such as DART or train services to the City Centre with onward travel to the airport.

"While we're disappointed with this announcement, we're confident that the



John Brady TD.

changes being made will ensure the future sustainability and viability of our services across our full network of routes."

Anyone with an existing booking to travel to/from one of the discontinued stops on March 2nd or thereafter will receive a full refund.

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed extreme disappointment at the decision. Over the last number of weeks Deputy Brady engaged directly with both Aircoach and the National Transport Authority (NTA), urging them not to explore ways to improve and sustain the route.

"Unfortunately Aircoach have decided not to take onboard the proposals and have chosen to discontinue the service completely," he said.

"I am extremely disappointed and frustrated by the decision to discontinue from 2nd March the Aircoach 702 service, which provides a crucial transport link between Dublin Airport, Bray, and

Greystones. This service has been an essential part of public transport infrastructure for many years, offering a reliable and convenient option for commuters, travellers, and residents. Its removal will create significant difficulties for the people of Wicklow, particularly those in Bray and Greystones, who rely on this route to access Dublin Airport efficiently.

"The 702 route has played a key role in reducing traffic congestion by offering an alternative to private car travel. At a time when we are actively encouraging the use of public transport and striving to reduce carbon emissions, it is deeply disappointing that Aircoach has chosen to withdraw this service for commercial reasons."

"Over the past number of weeks, I have engaged directly with both Aircoach and the National Transport Authority (NTA), urging them to explore ways to improve and sustain the route. I suggested several potential changes, including making it an express service to shorten journey times and encourage greater passenger uptake. However, despite these discussions, Aircoach has ultimately decided to proceed with discontinuing the 702 route, which is a devastating blow to the community."

"This decision is unacceptable, and I am calling on the Minister for Transport and the NTA to immediately intervene to ensure that a suitable replacement service is put in place. Wicklow cannot afford to lose this vital link to Dublin Airport. Public transport should be about providing essential services to people, not just about profit. The loss of this route will leave many residents, including workers, students, and families, without a viable transport option."

"I will be putting forward several proposals to ensure that a direct public transport link remains available to those in Bray and Greystones. I urge the Minister and the NTA to take this issue seriously and to work towards a solution that meets the needs of the people of Wicklow."

"This is an extremely disappointing outcome, but I will continue to fight to ensure that Wicklow residents have the public transport services they deserve. The people of Bray, Greystones, and the wider community should not be

left without this essential connection, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that a reliable alternative is put in place."

Greystones Independent councillor Stephen Stokes has also condemned Aircoach's decision. Public representatives were informed of the news by email from PR agency, Hanover Communications.

Cllr Stokes stated: "Aircoach has cited declining passenger numbers for this decision. The reality is that numbers are down because the service goes half way round the world, or worse it fails to turn up on occasion. What passengers want is efficient and reliable services. Aircoach have not listened to common sense."

Cllr Stokes wrote to Kim Swan to outline a number of issues on January 24th, 2025. At the time, he also urged consultation with local representatives before any changes to the 702 route (Greystones to Dublin Airport).

Following this Cllr Stokes successfully moved a motion at the January 2025 meeting of the Greystones Municipal District which outlined: "Greystones Municipal District thanks Aircoach for their continued service. However the Greystones Municipal District calls on Aircoach to ensure that drivers do not leave their engines idling for long periods before commencing a service. Additionally the Greystones Municipal District would request to be consulted ahead of any decision to change the 702 route."

Cllr Stokes is disappointed that Aircoach did not consult local representatives that they were planning to axe the 702 route, before announcing the decision. He stated: "The discontinuation of the 702 route is a significant setback for our community. This service has been an essential link for residents, facilitating direct travel to Dublin Airport. Its removal not only disrupts personal and professional travel plans but also undermines our collective efforts to promote sustainable transportation options. It's a pity that Aircoach didn't have the decency to write to local representative directly. Instead they hired a PR firm to handle their image. The image here is clear, Aircoach mismanaged previous changes, and now they have taken the easy option. It's a shame that the current management has

taken this decision. Aircoach has served North Wicklow for many years, which we are grateful for."

In light of these developments, Cllr Stokes is calling upon the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien, to intervene promptly. Cllr Stokes added: "It is imperative that the NTA and the Minister take immediate action to ensure the continuation of a direct public transport link between Bray-Greystones and Dublin Airport. Our residents deserve reliable and efficient transportation options, and it is the responsibility of our transport authorities to safeguard these essential services."

Cllr Stokes also urges Aircoach to reconsider its decision, taking into account the adverse effects on the community and the environment. "While commercial considerations are understandable, they should not overshadow the public good. I implore Aircoach to engage with local stakeholders to



Cllr Stephen Stokes.

explore viable solutions that maintain this critical connection. It's not too late to reverse course and do the right thing."

Simon Harris, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Defence and TD for Wicklow, has called for a review of public transportation options in Wicklow following Aircoach's decision.

In a letter to the National Transport Authority (NTA), Harris expressed concern over the significant disruption caused to his constituents, many of whom depend on the Aircoach service for access to Dublin Airport.

He highlighted a potential solution involving an existing bus service that travels through County Wicklow, stopping at Kilmacanoge. While the service currently allows passengers to disembark at Kilmacanoge, it does not permit passengers to board at this location. He has asked the NTA to consider revising this policy to allow passengers from North Wicklow to use the service as a viable alternative route to the airport.

The Tánaiste said: "From speaking to many people in Wicklow this week I understand the challenges that the withdrawal of the Aircoach

service has created. As a TD for Wicklow, safe and available public transport is a top priority of mine. I am committed to finding solutions that address their needs. I am asking that the NTA consider more options that could alleviate the impact on local residents. I am urging the NTA to prioritise this issue and work towards a swift resolution. I will continue to keep constituents updated on any developments regarding this matter and remain dedicated to ensuring that residents of North Wicklow have access to convenient and reliable public transportation."



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Tánaiste Simon Harris TD.

Clean Coasts kicks off 2025 roadshows in Greystones

Clean Coasts has successfully launched its 2025 Roadshow series in local Greystones school, St. David's Holy Faith Greystones. In collaboration with Greystones Tidy Towns and Clean Coasts North Wicklow, the event engaged students in an interactive and educational discussion about marine conservation.

During the discussion, Councillor Lourda Scott of the Green Party and Clean Coasts North Wicklow shared her experience as a volunteer and provided insight into marine and coastal litter on Wicklow's beaches. Clean Coasts' Biodiversity Officer, Liane Costello, discussed the importance of the marine environment, highlighting the critical role it plays in biodiversity, climate regulation, and coastal communities.



The joint presentation showcased the ongoing impact of marine litter and encouraged students to consider their role in protecting the coastline through small, everyday actions.

"Engaging with young people is a crucial part of our mission to encourage local guardianship of our marine and coastal environments," said Costello. "By fostering a deeper understanding of our marine environment and the threats it faces, we can empower the next generation to protect our coasts."

The Clean Coasts Roadshow is a series of informative talks and workshops tailored for coastal communities across Ireland, taking place between January and May each year. This initiative brings together individuals interested in protecting their local beaches, seas, and marine environments.

Clean Coasts Roadshow events cover a range of topics, including biodiversity, dune systems, marine litter, wildlife, sustainable developments, and the work of local groups and organizations. These events also serve as a platform for community groups to discuss practical matters, such as building volunteer capacity, attracting new members, and sharing responsibilities.



Clean Coasts Biodiversity Officer, Liane Costello, and Green Party Councillor, Lourda Scott, launched 2025 Clean Coasts Roadshow series in St. David's Holy Faith, Greystones.

MEP Kelly urges Minister to deliver on offshore wind projects, citing Codling Wind Park



MEP Sean Kelly.

MEP for Ireland South and Leader of Fine Gael in the European Parliament, Sean Kelly, has urged Ireland's new Minister for Energy, Darragh O'Brien, to make the delivery of Ireland's Phase 1 offshore wind projects a critical priority for his Department. Highlighting the transformative impact of these projects on Ireland's energy security, competitiveness, and transition to net zero, MEP Kelly called for urgent action from the Minister to ensure they are accelerated.

"Ireland's offshore wind sector is central to Ireland being a competitive, net zero, and energy-independent economy," Kelly noted. "At a time of volatile electricity prices, these projects offer price stability and security of supply for Irish homes and businesses."

MEP drew attention to the fact that the 2023 Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS1) auction delivered highly competitive prices at an average of €86 per MWh. In stark contrast, the aver-

age Irish Day-Ahead electricity market price in 2024 was nearly €100 per MWh, while the 2025 average so far has been €168 per MWh - almost double the ORESS price.

"This means the Phase 1 offshore wind projects will provide Irish energy users with clean, renewable electricity at a lower price than the current market is delivering. Ensuring their swift completion is vital for affordability and competitiveness," Kelly stressed.

One of the flagship projects in Ireland's offshore pipeline is Codling Wind Park, located off the coast of County Wicklow. With a planned insta-

lled capacity of 1.3GW, Codling will be the largest electricity generation project in the history of the state, surpassing Moneypoint in capacity. Once operational, it will generate enough affordable electricity to power over one million Irish homes annually. Additionally, its €200 million community benefit fund will provide significant investment into local communities in Wicklow over the projects lifetime.

Other successful projects from the ORESS auction - including Dublin Array, North Irish Sea Array (NISA), and Sceirde Rocksówill also

play a crucial role in bolstering Ireland's renewable energy capacity. Meanwhile, the Arklow Bank and Oriel projects, which will operate through Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with large energy users, will help decarbonise industrial electricity consumption and enhance security of supply.

MEP Kelly warned that the biggest risks to these projects are delays in the planning system, and called on Minister O'Brien to ensure all arms of the state work in unison to help get them constructed and generating electricity.

"We cannot allow these

vital projects to be delayed by prolonged planning processes and state-issued licensing bottlenecks," Kelly said. "An Bord Pleanála must prioritise these projects and deliver speedy planning decision in line with the European REPowerEU principles. We are still in an energy crisis - these offshore wind projects must be accelerated, not stalled."

Furthermore, judicial review challenges pose a significant risk to delivery timelines. "Delays mean higher costs and greater uncertainty. All processes must be streamlined, and we cannot have these projects held up by objectors. These are critical national infrastructure projects, and they must be treated as such by the Government, with prioritisation, resourcing, and acceleration."

In addition to fast-tracking offshore wind development, MEP Kelly called for stronger political commitment to deliv-

ering EirGrid's Shaping Our Electricity Future strategy.

"There is no point in having offshore wind farms ready to deliver power if our electricity grid isn't prepared to accommodate them," MEP Kelly said. "EirGrid's strategy must be implemented in full, with Government ensuring the necessary grid reinforcements progress swiftly through planning."

Concluding, MEP Kelly reiterated the urgent need for action. "Ireland has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to become a European leader in offshore wind, driving down energy prices while ensuring energy security and sustainability. But this can only happen if the Government treats these projects as the national priority they are. Minister O'Brien must ensure these projects are delivered on time, and without unnecessary delay."

'We cannot roll out the red carpet for fossil fuel-powered data centres'

The State cannot roll out the red carpet for new data centres powered by fossil fuels if we want to hit our legally binding carbon reduction targets, according to Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore.

Deputy Whitmore, who is the party's energy spokesperson, said: "The draft policy proposal just published by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) is deeply worrying. Essentially it gives the green light for more data centres, which could potentially be powered by fossil fuel generation, such as oil and gas."

"This is in complete conflict with our responsibilities under the Climate Act, which commits Ireland to a 51 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030.

"We are already facing an uphill battle in that regard, with both the EPA and Climate Advisory Council warning Ireland is not on track to achieve these targets. This will leave us open to EU fines of up to €20 billion."

"It appears that the CRU is not operating in lockstep with the government when it comes to climate action policy."

"Data centres currently account for 21 per cent of energy use, and this figure is set to rise to 30 per cent by 2032 - and that's just based on

the centres we have now.

"If we grant permission for more data centres, we face not just an emissions crisis, but there will be additional pressure placed on our already fragile energy grid."

"The expansion of data centres is a runaway train that will cost us dearly in the future. We now need a statement from Energy Minister Darragh O'Brien explaining how the CRU's data centre proposals are compatible with the government's Climate Action Plan."



Jennifer Whitmore TD.

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Contracts signed for Delgany to Blacklion pedestrian and cycle improvement scheme

On Friday, 14th February, Wicklow County Council signed a contract with Coffey Construction (Ireland) Ltd for the construction of the Delgany to Blacklion (Chapel Road) Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement Scheme. DBFL Consulting Engineers have also been appointed by the council to provide technical support throughout the construction phase.

This upgrade project will enhance the final two sections of Chapel Road, extending from the Chapel Road/Convent Road Roundabout north to Blacklion Manor Road at Seagreen. The improvements will include upgraded footpaths, the addition of cycle track facilities and enhancements for vehicular traffic, which will involve the realignment and widening of Chapel Road.

Coffey Construction (Ireland) Ltd is set to begin construction work on a phased basis in the coming weeks on a phased basis.

Cllr. Tom Fortune, Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District, highlighting the importance of ongoing investment said "I'm delighted as Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District to witness the signing of this contract and to see this project progress to construction stage which is a substantial investment for the District."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, welcoming the signing of the contracts stated "it is great to see this project taking another step forward towards its delivery. This project when completed will see a major improvement for road users including pedestrians and cyclists

from Delgany to Blacklion and will greatly enhance connectivity in the area."

Joe Lane, Director of Services for Transportation and Infrastructure Delivery at Wicklow County Council said "I am very pleased to see this project moving forward, the project team and I look forward to working with DBFL Consulting Engineers and the Contractors Coffey Construction (Ireland) Ltd over the coming months to deliver this project."

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Minister for Defence Simon Harris TD, welcomed the announcement, saying "This is fantastic and much needed news for the people of Greystones and Delgany. For far too long many have advocated for this improvement to the road so it is great to see it come to fruition. For quite some time I have advocated sustainable transport options in the area so to see this important project move forward is of



Cllr Tom Fortune (Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District), Kieran Ryan (Operations Director Coffey Group), Joe Lane (Director of Services Wicklow County Council), John Bowes (Senior Engineer Wicklow County Council) at the signing of the Chapel Road contact in Council Buildings, Wicklow Town.

great relief. These improvements to Chapel Road will undoubtedly

help make the area safer, greener, and more accessible for everyone, particularly cyclists and pedestrians.

"This scheme reflects the government's commitment to developing sustainable infrastructure and improving connectivity across Wicklow."



Barry McGauley (Senior QS Coffey Group), Tony Croke (Contracts Manager Coffey Group), Andrew Robertson (DBFL Consulting Engineers), Kevin Brennan (DBFL Consulting Engineers), Linda Healy (SEO Wicklow County Council), Patrick O'Connor (SEE Wicklow County Council), Ruairi O'Hanlon (District Engineer, Greystones District), Micheal Penston (Executive Engineer Wicklow County Council), Declan O'Brien (Executive Engineer Wicklow County Council), Cllr Tom Fortune (Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District), Kieran Ryan (Operations Director Coffey Group), Joe Lane (Director of Services Wicklow County Council), John Bowes (Senior Engineer Wicklow County Council) and Kevin Sturgeon (DBFL Consulting Engineers) at the signing of the Chapel Road contact in Council Buildings, Wicklow Town.

PUNK ALLEY
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mermaidartscentre.ie | 01 272 4030

Participants of the February Freezebury Challenge on Bray Seafront. Freezebury is being undertaken by Andrew Woodcock of Bray to raise funds for his brother who's battling cancer in the USA. This challenge involves immersing oneself in the cold waters of the Irish Sea (or any cold body of water) for one minute longer each day - starting at 1 minute on February 1st and building up to 28 minutes on February 28th. Pictured are Andrew Woodcock, Glen McGrogan, Barry Dempsey and Ladies Sea Swimmers Louise, Christine, Liuz, Aine, Sam and Caoimhe. See gofund.me.1a1cf8b1. Pic: Joe McQuillan.

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Why Move? Extend, Update and Renovate!

The Spring months are the peak times for house sales. And no doubt many residents in Wicklow will be considering making the big move. If you have this in mind you should also consider the downside. You will be moving away from your circle of friends and perhaps moving school for your children. Then there is the cost factor. There will be estate agent's fees and solicitor fees. You will need to pay for a survey on your new home and of course there will be moving costs.

All of this, not to mention the stress. Is it worth it? The several thousand euro you will be spending could go towards updating your existing home. It would pay for a new kitchen and bathroom. You could redecorate your entire house, inside and outside, fit wooden floors and new carpets. Have your garden designed and landscaped.

However, if your home is simply too small for your needs you could look at building on an extension or converting the attic. You are allowed to add 40 square meters of an extension without applying for planning permission. You may have heard recent reports that the government is considering introducing legislation to allow home owners to erect modular houses in their gardens to help with the house shortage. This is definitely worth some consideration if your current home is too big for your needs, and you want a more manageable house.

Reasons not to consider moving house in this 'bubble market' but rather consider Renovating and Updating - even Extending.

You can get a fresh new look to your home by improving it and it's a lot cheaper than moving. You will save on auctioneer's fees, solititors' fees, survey fees and moving costs. The money you save can go into getting the exact new bathroom or kitchen you always wanted; landscaping the garde; painting the house inside and out; getting a new state of the art heating system, tiling, wooden floors, etc., etc..

And you don't have to move out of the area where all your family's friends are. Indeed you could build on that extra room (or two) you always wanted or even if the garden is big enough build a new house! And all the services are already there.

If you are minded to extend it is vital that you engage the services of an architect or engineer to advise you about regulations and costs.



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Mountain biking at Ballinastoe Woods, Courtesy Celtic Routes, from Failte Ireland's content pool

Outdoor Recreation Plan opens for online consultation

Deadline for submissions is 1pm, 26th February

Wicklow County Council, in collaboration with Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership and County Wicklow Partnership, invites the public to participate in an online consultation for the development of a five-year Outdoor Recreation Plan for Wicklow.

The online consultation will close at 1pm on 26th February. This initiative follows two well-received face-to-face public consultations held in Blessington and Newtownmountkennedy.

The feedback collected during this online consultation will help shape the Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Plan, focusing on the development of new amenities, the maintenance of existing resources, and improving access to new

participation opportunities throughout the county.

Cllr Paul O'Brien, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, encourages all residents of County Wicklow to have their say to shape the future of Outdoor Recreation provision in Wicklow. He emphasised the valuable resources available locally and urged everyone to get involved.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County

Council, Emer O'Gorman, said "As part of the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy each county is required to develop their specific plan. This will be Wicklow's third outdoor recreation plan, so I encourage all interested parties to complete the questionnaire and have a say in directing our further development and investments in recreation throughout the county."

Director of Service, Theresa O'Brien,

highlighted the importance of the public inputting into such plans, saying, "for this plan to have real impact on the future development of outdoor recreation infrastructure and participation opportunities, it is vital for the people of Wicklow to engage."

Members of the public can complete the online questionnaire until 1pm on the 26th February through <https://arcg.is/0a4Gfe0>

'Food for thought' event sparks valuable discussions

The Food for Thought think tank event in Bray, hosted by Bray & North Wicklow Area Partnership (BNWAP) on Wednesday, 5th February, was a resounding success, bringing together a wide range of voluntary and community organisations committed to tackling food poverty in the region.

With strong attendance at the Little Flower Hall, the event facilitated meaningful discussions on key issues affecting families

and individuals struggling with food insecurity, including the impact of the cost of living crisis, reducing stigma around accessing food

support, and improving coordination between local services.

Attendees shared valuable insights, exchanged ideas, and explored prac-

tical ways to enhance food provision for those in need. Many participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect with other



Participants at the The Food for Thought think tank event in Bray.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

TURNKEY HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS/HOUSING SCHEMES AND/OR LAND FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL/AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN COUNTY WICKLOW

Wicklow County Council is seeking to increase the number of social/affordable houses being brought into use, through various delivery mechanisms, including the acquisition of turnkey units, unfinished developments and direct construction projects by the Council on lands to be acquired.

Proposals should be well located within or very close to a town and be within walking distance of primary services such as schools, shops, community facilities. Lands should be zoned residential in the relevant Local Area/Town Plan. Social houses are particularly needed in the following areas:

- Bray
- Greystones-Delgany
- Arklow
- Blessington
- Enniskerry
- Ashford
- All other towns/villages in County Wicklow with housing needs

Affordable houses are required in all the areas listed above (provided the applications meet the criteria) plus the following areas:

- Wicklow Town
- Newtownmountkennedy
- Rathnew
- Rathdrum

An 'Expressions of Interest' Application Form is available from the Housing Capital Projects Office, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Station Road, Wicklow or can be requested by phone (0404 20100 Housing Capital Projects) or email at EOIHousing@wicklowcoco.ie. Copies of the form are also available on the Council website at Wicklow.ie/Housing/HousingSupply

Submissions must be received not later than 4pm on Friday 25th July 2025. Wicklow County Council is not obliged to purchase any turnkey housing development/housing schemes and or land submitted as part of this process.

Joe Lane,
Director of Services,
Transportation & Infrastructure Delivery.

organisations and strengthen collaboration within the community.

County Wicklow Food Coordinator Aisling Kirwan remarked: "We were delighted with the turnout and engagement from local groups. Following the success of similar events in other parts of Wicklow, it's clear that bringing people together in this way is key to developing sustainable solutions to food poverty."

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the importance of continued networking and cooperation to support those facing food insecurity.

BNWAP would like to thank all who attended and contributed to the discussion. The partnership remains committed to working with local groups to address food poverty in the region and looks forward to future collaborations.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

Roads to be closed:

Main Street Rathdrum - R755.

From the Junction at Parnell Memorial Park to the Junction of L-97554 Lower Street.

Period of closure:

From 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm Monday, 17th March 2025.

Alternative Routes:

L- 97554 – Lower Street, Rathdrum.

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

Reason for Closure:

To facilitate the St. Patrick's Day Parade

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Infrastructure Delivery, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 3rd March, 2025.

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

Whitmore raises Go-Ahead contract in Dail

Speaking in the Dáil last Wednesday, Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore, raised concerns about the recent rollout of the BusConnects programme, highlighting significant issues with the service provided by Go-Ahead Ireland and calling for immediate action from the Department of Transport.



Jennifer Whitmore TD.



Rena Byrne and Ladies Senior Footballer of the Year Ciara Byrne at the Garden County GAA Awards in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

€143k funding for Ballyknocken flood relief



Edward Timmins TD.

Deputy Edward Timmins who has been campaigning for flood relief prevention measures in Ballyknocken West Wicklow has welcomed the announcement of €143,000 in funding awarded under the 2025 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Works funding.

Speaking from Ballyknocken today Monday 18th February 2025, Fine Gael TD Edward Timmins stated: "I have been working on this issue for the past few years. Many people in Ballyknocken have suffered from their homes being flooded. I believe this flood relief funding will be an essential preventative measure for the future."

On the work of Wicklow County Council Engineer Pat Byrne, Deputy Edward Timmins pointed out: "I would like to pay tribute to Wicklow County Council Engineer Pat Byrne for his work in helping to secure funding for this important project."

"Key to any really good, successful public service is reliability. If it's not reliable, the system is completely undermined. People need to have trust that a bus will show up when it says it will," Deputy Whitmore stated. "Unfortunately, when BusConnects was finally rolled out, the service provider was not ready for it, and the entire programme has been undermined."

"Go-Ahead has been proven time and time again as a provider that cannot deliver on its contractual obligations and we had an incredible situation in Wicklow where 3, 4, or 5 buses in a row have been cancelled on particular routes and drivers have been unsure of their new routes. Students can't get to college, people are missing interviews, and this is causing enormous difficulties when it should have been a positive addition," Deputy Whitmore explained.

"The rollout of BusConnects should have been a good news story, but Go-Ahead undermined it by not being prepared, and they are still not on top of it. I met with them and heard about their staffing shortages that they are trying to address, but there is a serious question here of why were awarded the contract to begin with," Deputy Whitmore questioned, "I am calling on the Minister for Transport to examine this issue and ensure that if a public service is contracted out, then the contractor

is able to do the job.

"I have heard reports that Go-Ahead is now being awarded additional services and I am very concerned to hear that the 65, servicing West Wicklow, is one of these routes. The 65 is an essential service for people living in Blessington and in Ballymore Eustace to access Dublin City, and there are serious concerns over its future as a Go-Ahead service. It makes no sense to keep rewarding a private operator that is not fulfilling its duties when we have a perfectly good provider in Dublin Bus, and one that people trust. I would like the Minister for Transport to clarify whether or not these reports are true, and if so which routes are being handed over to Go-Ahead," Deputy Whitmore added.

"It is crucial that our bus service is reliable, efficient, and has the trust of the communities it services. Right now, we cannot say that it is any of those three things. Urgent action is needed to address this," Deputy Whitmore concluded.

Minister of State, Jerry Buttimer, committed to taking Deputy Whitmore's comments, questions, and concerns to the Department of Transport.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

Roads to be closed:

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

Period of closure:

From 1:30pm to 3:00pm Monday 17th March, 2025.

Alternative Routes:

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

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

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

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

Reason for Closure:

To facilitate the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Infrastructure Delivery, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 3rd March, 2025.

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

International Women's Day
Women of Faith
Invitation to a Breakfast Gathering
Friday 7th March 10.30am - 12.30pm
'Celebrating Equality through Peace, Reconciliation and Forgiveness'

Keynote Speakers:
Patricia Coyle **Fr. Damian Farnon**
Award-winning Journalist *Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces*

Kilian House Family Centre, La Touche Road, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. A63 CK06

Please register your interest in attending.
<https://gkpastoralarea.ie/women-of-faith-series/>
Email queries : womenoffaith@gkpastoralarea.ie

'Bray's Victorian benches to languish in ruin for years more'

"The Victorian benches on Bray's seafront have been derelict and hastily covered eyesores for more than a decade now," says Wicklow Aontu member Ciaran Hogan, "and it looks like the council have no plans or initiative to do anything about it."

"At a recent Bray Municipal District council meeting held Tuesday 11th February it was told that the Victorian bench restoration project has had a sum of €140,000 held for renovations of the two benches, but that much more would be needed and no effort is currently being made to raise additional funds, or do anything to address the benches immediately," said Mr Hogan.



The funds were granted by Bray Municipal District in February 2019, six years ago, under a push from then-councillor Steven Matthews. The sum is equal to three years of earnings at the mean industrial wage (€895.51 per week). "With all that money and time we should have been able to build two sheltered benches by now," continued Mr Hogan.

"The shelters were erected in 1908/09 along with the Bandstand, and stood beautifully for many decades until they were closed to the public with fencing and black netting in the mid 2010's. The benches, like most of Wicklow, received some damage from the recent storm Eowyn, with parts of the roof being completely removed. This exposure to more wind and rainfall will hasten decay and eventual collapse of both benches. We have heard about so many project of government waste, such as the



Ciaran Hogan on Bray Seafront.

'Gucci' bike shed at €336,000. the security hut costing €1.4 million, Dublin castle curtains costing €70,000, a wall that cost €490,000 in Ballsbridge, the IT system for the Arts Council that cost €6.7 million to deliver nothing, and of course the National Children's Hospital that may end up costing the taxpayer €3 billion. Why is this government both local and national completely incapable of spending wisely and getting projects completed on time and under budget? "We elect people who can't manage projects to spend your money with no oversight. I implore Wicklow residents to attend council meetings and demand a higher standard from their councillors."

Traffic chaos getting worse in Kilmacanogue

The traffic chaos is 'getting worse and worse' at the Circle K northbound in Kilmacanogue and it's only a matter of time before there's an accident, Cllr Melanie Corrigan has warned.

Raising the issue at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Corrigan said "This main artery is coming out of Kilmacanogue is also serving all the traffic coming down from Roundwood, and there's chaos on the weekends and particularly at school times and we really need this dealt with by TII as a matter of urgency before there is an accident there." Picking up on this point, Cllr Joe Behan said "There has been another almost fatal accident on the Red Lane just further south from Kilmacanogue at the turn-off to the Glenview. And what I think has been happening is, people who are not familiar with Wicklow, if they miss the first turn for

Kilmac just after the garage, they don't go up the slip road, they carry on to the Glenview, they turn off at the Glenview, go over the bridge and they think they can climb up the Sugarloaf up the

Red Lane, which is effectively a small local road. And I want to ask if it is possible to re-designate that road as a local road only and for local access only, and divert people up the main road up towards the Sugarloaf and Kilmacanogue. I think that would be a lot safer. Cllr Behan also pointed out that "Noise mitigation measures still haven't been put in place for the people who live on the parallel road at Kilmacanogue, and it's a disgrace that that work has not been done. It was agreed a number of years ago."



**COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

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

Road to be closed:
R762 Mill Road and Church Road, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

Period of closure:
From 10.30 am to 12.30 pm Monday 17th March, 2025.

Alternative Routes:
R761 Killincarrig Village and Lower Kindlestown Road.
Traffic Management will be in place.

Reason for Closure:
This is to facilitate the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Infrastructure Delivery, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow or via email at roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 3rd March, 2025.

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



Aine Fogarty with the Young Player of the Year Award, Lauren O'Reilly with the Player of the Year Award and Emma Byrne with the Top Scorer Award at the Avondale GAA & Camogie Club dinner dance in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

BNM Recycling workers to commence strike ballot

SIPTU members employed in Bord na Mona (BNM) Recycling, the country's last publicly owned domestic waste collection service, will commence a ballot for strike action in response to the threat to their terms and conditions of employment from a proposed privatisation of the enterprise.

SIPTU Divisional Organiser, Adrian Kane, said: "SIPTU representatives met with the management of Bord na Móna Recycling on Tuesday (18th February). At this meeting, it was the management position that it could not offer any assurances in terms of the protection of our mem-

bers' terms and conditions of employment after the handover to a private enterprise.

"Following this our Shop Stewards met last night (Wednesday 19th February). At this meeting it was decided that our members had no option but to commence a ballot for industrial action, up to

and including strike action, in response to the threat to their terms and conditions of employment from a sale of the company.

"SIPTU has called for a full investigation into the proposed sale of Bord na Mona Recycling to a private unlimited company for an amount which has

not been revealed and in a manner which provides no guarantee for our members' terms and conditions of employment. The move will also result in domestic waste collection in our State being left solely in the hands of the private sector. This is a position that runs counter to reports by the Oireachtas,

local councils, and international best practices.

"What this move amounts to is the Government's repudiation of a so-called 'Just Transition' for Bord na Mona workers who have served that semi-state enterprise well for many years and were active in moving it away from peat production to other key roles. The Government approach is a slap in the face for Midlands communities and makes no

economic sense.

"It shows the clear direction of travel of our current right-wing administration. That is away from the development of our economy through utilising the best of public and private enterprise towards gombeen economics, where workers rights, public benefit and

environmental protection are secondary to the quick buck."

He added: "Our several hundred members have no option other than balloting for industrial action to protect their livelihoods. However, there is also a bigger fight on here over an economic approach which follows European

best practice or one that seeks the destruction of the State's role in the provision of key services to communities. "The ballot of SIPTU members employed in Bord na Mona Recycling will be conducted in the workplace and is expected to be completed by early March.



Antoinette Barrett and Deirdre Cullen at the Garden County GAA Awards in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

'Monument to rip off Ireland'

Aontu's County Wicklow spokesperson Ciaran Hogan has called on the government to end the M50 toll rip off of hard pressed commuters.

He stated: "The government has collected €2.2 billion on the M50 tolls since 2008 according to a report on the Pat Kenny show. The two M50 bridges were built initially at a cost of £58m. The PPP that built the bridges recouped all the construction costs in just 1 year of tolls. The M50 Bridges were sold to the state for €600m in 2007. Since then the commuters using the bridges have paid €2.2 billion. That's well over €1000 for every tax payer in Ireland. Last year they paid a whopping €212m on the M50 toll. Commuter have paid for this bridge 31 times. The M50 bridges are a monument to rip off Ireland.

"This is a tax on work. It is a tax on those who have no public transport. The government owns the M50 toll. The government are treating the M50 toll as a cash cow, jacking up the tolls regularly on those living in a commuter hell. Stop ripping of commuters."



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

Road to be closed:

From the Junction of R753 and R747 (Aughrim Bridge) Glen Road, Chapel Lane and Rednagh Road, Aughrim.

Period of closure:

From 11:00 am to 12:30 pm Monday 17th March, 2025.

Alternative Routes:

LR747 – Divert at Annacurra to Rednagh Road.

R753 – Divert to R747 at Cronebeg.

Traffic Management will be in place.

Reason for Closure:

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

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Infrastructure Delivery, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, Co Wicklow or via email at roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie not later than **12.00 noon on Tuesday 3rd March, 2025.**

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

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COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028
PROPOSED MATERIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE
DRAFT WICKLOW TOWN & RATHNEW LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) that Wicklow County Council, being the planning authority for the area, proposes to **amend** the draft Local Area Plan (LAP) for **Wicklow Town & Rathnew**. The proposed amendments would, if made, constitute a material alteration of the draft LAP which was published on 09 October 2024.

The 'Wicklow Town & Rathnew LAP 2025-2031' will consist of a written statement indicating the objectives in detail as may be required by the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, maps and appendices. This LAP will, when adopted, replace the existing Wicklow Town – Rathnew Town Development Plan 2013-2019. The new LAP should be read in conjunction with the County Wicklow Development Plan 2022-2028.

The Proposed Amendments are accompanied by the following additional reports or Addendums to the reports published with the draft LAP:

- Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Determination
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination
- Addendum I to the SEA Environmental Report for the draft LAP – this is an SEA Environmental Report, incorporating Screening for SEA, which provides information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed amendments, pursuant to the European SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended).
- Addendum I to the AA Natura Impact Report for the draft LAP – this is a Stage 2 AA Natura Impact Report, incorporating Screening for AA, considering likely significant effects on and effects on the integrity of European sites - pursuant to Article 6[3] of the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended);
- Addendum I to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which provides a strategic flood risk assessment of the proposed amendments, carried out in accordance with 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for planning authorities' (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009 – pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)).

DISPLAY OF PROPOSED MATERIAL AMENDMENTS

The 'Draft Wicklow Town & Rathnew LAP 2025-2031' and the Proposed Material Amendments to the LAP (and associated SEA, AA and SFRA addendums) will be available to view at the following locations, during their normal opening hours, from **Monday 03 March 2025 to Monday 31 March 2025 (5.00pm) inclusive**:

- Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Station Road, Wicklow Town
- Wicklow Municipal District Office, Town Hall, Market Square, Wicklow Town
- Wicklow Town Library
- Copies of the Draft LAP and the Proposed Material Amendments to the LAP will be available to download and view on the Council's website www.wicklow.ie through an online consultation portal. Scan the QR code on this notice to access the portal.

MAKING A SUBMISSION

Submissions or observations regarding **ONLY** the Proposed Material Amendments and the associated reports are hereby invited from the public and interested bodies between the dates **03 March 2025 and 31 March 2025**. Children, or groups or associations representing the interests of children, are entitled to make submissions or observations. Written submissions or observations made before midnight on **31 March 2025** will be taken into consideration before the making of the Local Area Plan.

Submissions may be made in one of the following ways:

1. Write to 'Wicklow Town & Rathnew LAP', Administrative Officer, Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, Station Road, Wicklow Town.
2. Through the **online consultation portal** at www.wicklow.ie or scan the QR code on this notice.

NOTE

- YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.
- All submissions are to be clearly marked with 'Wicklow Town & Rathnew LAP'.
- All submissions should include your name, a map (where appropriate) and, where relevant, details of any organisation, community group or company etc., which you represent.
- Please make your submission by one medium only, i.e. hard copy or through the portal.
- All valid submissions will form a part of the statutory Chief Executive's report and will be available to view online.
- The planning process is an open and public one, therefore all submissions/observations are a matter of public record and will be available for public viewing, they may also be placed on the County Council's website and therefore should not include any personal information.
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Dementia organisation wants to see 'memory café' network expand to Wicklow

Dementia can be a challenging condition for both individuals and their loved ones. But there is support available, and one great way to connect with others facing similar experiences is by attending a Dementia Café.



A memory café event in full swing.

A Dementia Café is a friendly, informal meeting space where individuals living with dementia, their families, carers, and even healthcare professionals can gather, share experiences, ask questions, and provide mutual support. These cafés are welcoming, non-judgmental spaces that aim to reduce the feelings of isolation often experienced by those affected by dementia.

The Dementia Café Network, part of Engaging Dementia, is already active across Ireland, offering free and accessible monthly meetings. These cafés offer more than just emotional support. They provide information about dementia, practical advice, and a place to discuss challenges and solutions in a relaxed setting.

Kim Tully, CEO of Engaging Dementia states "as part of our mission to expand the support network, we're reaching out to see if anyone is interested in setting up a local Dementia Café in their community in Co. Wicklow. If you are passionate about helping others affected by dementia and think that there's a need for a café in your area, we'd love to hear from you. It would be great to see some Dementia Cafés open across the Garden County in 2025".

"We believe that there is a lot of interest in Bray and Greystones" says Kim "and it's just a matter of getting a team of volunteers to start one. Engaging Dementia and the Irish Dementia Café Network would be happy

to support you so get in touch today. In other counties, volunteers have set cafes up in Community Halls, Church Halls and local GAA clubs, and with the support of the Dementia Café Network, you'll have all the tools you need to make it a success".

For more information on existing Dementia Cafés or to inquire about starting one in your community, visit www.dementiacafe.ie. Together, we can create a more connected, supportive environment for those living with dementia and their families.

For further details or to discuss starting a Dementia Café in your area, please contact Michelle at michelle@engagingdementia.ie or call us at 01 260 8138.



John Flynn from the Session 55 music group pictured during rehearsals in the Ashford Heritage Centre last Friday. The music group is for people aged 55 and over.

Unprotected

Ann Kennedy's memoir is dedicated to abused women and is a testament of strength and struggle

"Anne's has been a life thoroughly lived against a lot of odds. When you're in her company, you find yourself being stimulated by her creativity, passion and determination, Like the song says there's 'something inside so strong' where Ann is concerned."
 - Fergus Finlay, former Chief Executive of Bernardos children's charity

Ann Kennedy's memoir offers a window into a complex life and urges need for questions about health service to be asked and properly answered.



Ann Kennedy with copies of her memoir, *Unprotected*.

An accomplished artist and disability advocate, Ann takes us on a journey through her life from the age of seven.

She was severely deaf due to being born with congenital Rubella and in school found it difficult to read and engage with others. Her deafness lay undiagnosed until her twenties. Isolated and insecure as a teenager, she spent time in a psychiatric hospital where she was raped by a patient. At a later time and difficult place, she was sexually assaulted again, this time

by a priest.

Ann attended IADT art college in Dun Laoghaire and later went to London where she worked on the beloved animated film *Watership Down*. She eventually returned to Ireland where she worked as a fine artist and illustrator.

Her health deteriorated and in trying to find help she discovered that her previous psychiatric history meant she was met by a lack of sympathy and regard by doctors and consultants. It was later revealed that she and her twin sister

Margaret both suffer from a rare neuromuscular disease. They were accepted onto the undiagnosed disease program in NIH Bethesda, USA, where the tests are still ongoing.

The book ends with Ann returning again to the hospital where she was raped, with the hope of exorcising the demons from the past so she can move on to a more peaceful future.

Unprotected is available to buy for €17.99 in Bridge Street Books, Wicklow Town.



Andrew Woodcock pictured after completing his latest Freezebury Challenge event at Bray beach. The February Freezebury Challenge is being undertaken by Andrew to raise funds for his brother who's battling cancer in the USA. This challenge involves immersing oneself in the cold waters of the Irish Sea (or any cold body of water) for one minute longer each day - starting at 1 minute on February 1st and building up to 28 minutes on February 28th. See gofund.me.1a1cf8b1. Pic: Joe McQuillan.

About the author

Ann was born in 1952 and is an award-winning children's writer and illustrator, a graphic artist and a fine artist with works sold internationally. Originally hailing from Dun Laoghaire, she has been living in Greystones now for a number of years. She has also published a collection of her short stories. Her written works describe the difficulties she has faced in life due to being born with Rubella. A well-known disability and human rights activist, she has an indefatigable spirit and a determined approach to problem solving, a quality she shares with her identical twin sister.

At a time when her career began to develop in a concrete and professional way, she became unwell with what appeared at first to be a mystery complex medical condition. She travelled abroad to Finland, Netherlands, UK and finally the USA in search of answers. Although she still has no fixed diagnosis, she says the understanding of what's happening has brought a part closure for her.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028
 PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO PROPOSED VARIATION NO. 2
 TO THE WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028
 (RELATED TO THE WICKLOW TOWN & RATHNEW LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031)

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) that Wicklow County Council, being the planning authority for the area, proposes to alter Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. The proposed alterations would, if made, constitute a material alteration of the Proposed Variation which was published on 09 October 2024.

The purpose of the Proposed Variation is to ensure consistency between the draft and final Wicklow Town & Rathnew LAP with the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The Proposed Alterations to the Proposed Variation are accompanied by the following additional reports or Addendums to the reports published with the Proposed Variation

- Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Determination for Proposed Alterations;
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination for Proposed Alterations;
- Addendum I to the SEA Screening Report for the Proposed Variation – this is an SEA screening report, pursuant to the European SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended); and
- Addendum I to the AA Screening Report for the Proposed Variation – this is an AA screening report, pursuant to the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

DISPLAY OF PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS

Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Proposed Material Alterations to the Proposed Variation (and associated reports) will be available to view at the following locations, during their normal opening hours, from Monday 03 March 2025 to Monday 31 March 2025 (5.00pm) inclusive:

- Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Station Road, Wicklow Town
- Wicklow Municipal District Office, Town Hall, Market Square, Wicklow Town
- Wicklow Town Library
- Copies of the Proposed Variation and Proposed Material Alterations are available to download and view on the Council's website www.wicklow.ie through an online consultation portal. Scan the QR code on this notice to access the portal.

MAKING A SUBMISSION

Submissions or observations regarding ONLY the Proposed Material Alterations and the associated reports are hereby invited from the public and interested bodies between the dates 03 March 2025 and 31 March 2025. Children, or groups or associations representing the interests of children, are entitled to make submissions or observations. Written submissions or observations made before midnight on 31 March 2025 will be taken into consideration before the making of the Variation.

Submissions may be made in one of the following ways:

1. Write to 'Variation No. 2 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028', Administrative Officer, Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, Station Road, Wicklow Town.
2. Through the online consultation portal at www.wicklow.ie or scan the QR code on this notice.

NOTE

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- All submissions are to be clearly marked with 'Variation No. 2 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028'.
- All submissions should include your name, a map (where appropriate) and, where relevant, details of any organisation, community group or company etc., which you represent.
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Junior B Footballer of the Year Micky Fahy with Felicity Fitzpatrick at the Garden County GAA Awards in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

'Arklow has suffered from decades of Government neglect'

In his maiden Dail speech, Wicklow-Wexford Sinn Féin TD Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin raised a number of issues effecting Arklow and South Wicklow, which he says has "suffered from decades of government neglect and has been allowed to die on its knees".

"However, it has such massive, unharnessed potential and its re-development needs to be a key objective of this new Programme for Government," he continued.

"As the long-awaited Wastewater plant has now been completed, we need to see the biggest ever affordable and social homes building programme in the history of Arklow and similarly for Carnew, Rathdrum and other villages.

"We need to Harness Arklow's huge Maritime potential - redevelop Arklow's Quays; its Riverbank, and neglected Arklow's Main Street area - make it great again! We need to work to redevelop recreational facilities for the people of Wicklow/Wexford, and see delivery of the proposed Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway.

"We need to support Arklow's fishermen including CJ Gaffney and family whose shocking case was often mentioned during the last term were in Leinster House. I want to see this Programme for Government finally delivering justice for CJ and his family. Down the coast at Courtown a new Coastguard station needs to be delivered during this Programme for Government.

"We need to upgrade services at Arklow Primary Care Centre and expedite the one planned for neigh-



Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin TD.

bouring Gorey. However, buildings are no good unless they are adequately staffed with GPs, Psychologists, and Occupational Therapists.

"Similarly with CAMHS - a local voluntary group-Talk2Tom that doesn't receive a single euro in statutory funding has to step in and provide Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in North Wexford and South Wicklow due to government's failure to address this crisis. In addition, there are no acute mental health beds in Co. Wexford. These things are shocking in a wealthy country that's awash with a massive budgetary surplus.

"We need new community spaces/centres/buildings for Arklow's and South Wicklow's many excellent voluntary, community groups. We need to re-develop Arklow's old Eir building that had been earmarked for speculative IPAS use and put it to the use of the local community as should also be the case with other similar buildings in our neglected towns and villages that are being flipped for quick profit.

"To reduce traffic and our Carbon Footprint-we need to upgrade the outdated Rail Link from Wexford/Wicklow to Dublin; also to develop a new exit in Arklow to the M11 Motorway. Similarly, we need to see tangible progress on the inner relief road for Gorey, linking to the M11 as a matter of urgency. We need to see more bus stops for Arklow's growing suburbs and an expansion of the Local Link Bus services for our rural villages.

"In short - this Programme for Government needs to be Ambitious For Arklow and South Wicklow and cater for Goreys rapid growth as well as the long-neglected villages and rural hinterlands in North Wexford from Ballindaggin and Bunclody - right across through Ferns, Kilmuckridge, Ballycanew and beyond as well as all of their surrounding farming communities."

23.5% jump in unaccompanied learner drivers

Ireland South MEP Cynthia Ni Mhurchu, a member of the EU Transport Committee, has called for parents to be more vigilant as new Garda figures show a 23.5% increase in the number of unaccompanied learner drivers caught by Gardai on Wexford and Wicklow roads between 2023 and 2024.



MEP Cynthia Ni Mhurchu.

Gardai in the district issued 140 fixed charge notices to unaccompanied learner drivers in Wexford and Wicklow in Q2 2023. They issued 173 in Q2 2024, a jump of 23.5%.

It is against the law to drive unaccompanied on a learner permit, and penalties apply if you are convicted of driving unaccompanied or you allow your vehicle to be driven by an unaccompanied learner driver.

Ni Mhurchu said the figures are disappointing: "Learner drivers lack the experience and judgment required to handle complex driving situations. That can mean more accidents on our roads.

"When an inexperienced driver gets behind the wheel of a car without any supervision, they are endangering themselves, other drivers and other road users."

12 people have been killed so far on our roads in 2025, as of January 29th.

Tree Festival welcomes Springtime with a day of nature, music and activities

On Sunday 9th March, Belmont Demesne will burst into life as the Tree Festival invites families and nature lovers to celebrate the arrival of spring with a joyful day packed with activities, entertainment and community spirit.

This vibrant festival will feature an exciting range of activities, including a Birds of Prey show, archery lessons, a wildlife trail, pottery demonstrations, puppet-making, storytelling, dancing, and much more. Visitors can also enjoy a craft market, take part in a raffle, and soak up the festive atmosphere with live performances throughout the day.

As part of the event's commitment to nature and sustainability, 3,000 native bare-root trees will be available for free to the public on the day. These will be a mixture of oak, alder, beech, birch, silver birch, and a small amount of sweet chestnut and hazel

trees. This is an effort to support local biodiversity, rewilding and tree planting efforts. You can order your trees in advance by emailing 80maxireland@gmail.com and pick them up on the day. Experts from Green Friends and Rewild Wicklow will be on hand to advise on soil suitability and tree species and they will even help out with the planting if you wish. The trees are 2 to 3 year old saplings so will fit no problem in the boot of a car.

Located at Belmont Demesne in Greystones, the festival is FREE to attend, with a €3 charge for parking. Food options on the day include The Café at Belmont,

SOL Servants of Love, The Crepe Box and The Divine Foodie or feel free to bring along a picnic.

This growing festival is in its fourth year, with over 1.5k people in attendance in 2024. 80Max, a local group committed to climate action and reducing emissions, pioneered this event in collaboration with Belmont Demesne, and this year will also be supported by Bray & North Wicklow Area Partnership (BNWAP).

So mark your calendar and head along on Sunday March 9th for a fun-filled celebration of trees, community, and the great outdoors!



Belmont Demesne.

Wicklow writer named in KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2025 shortlist

Wicklow-based author Eilish Fisher has been shortlisted for this year's KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. RTE broadcaster Rick O'Shea announced the ten shortlisted titles at a ceremony in the Crescent Arts Centre in Belfast.

Fisher's shortlisted debut novel, 'Fia and the Last Snow Deer', is published by Puffin and its main character, Fia, is on a mission to end an interminable winter in pre-historic, snow-covered Ireland. Originally from Vermont, Fisher has lived most of her life in Ireland and brings the legends and history of both to her writing. She has a degree in English, History and Medieval Irish Studies, a master's degree in early Medieval Irish History and Literature and a Doctorate in Medieval English Literature from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUI Maynooth). She has received both a World's Ireland mentorship and a full Literary Bursary Award from the Arts Council of Ireland.

Speaking at the announcement, Elaina Ryan, CEO of Children's Books Ireland said: "This is the 35th year of the only Irish awards dedicated to cele-

brating books created for children and the calibre of writing and illustration just keeps getting better! Our dedicated panel of judges outdid last year's record, reading a total of 169 titles from Irish or Ireland-based writers and illustrators. After whittling those down to an initial longlist of 19 books, this shortlist represents the best books for children and young people and showcases the rich diversity of titles published in Ireland or by Irish artists."

The shortlisted books include three debut titles, two Irish language titles, and two titles from former Laureate na nOg. These will compete for six awards at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards ceremony, held on 19th May as part of the International Literature Festival Dublin. Categories include the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year Award, as well as honours for fiction and illustration and the Junior Juries' Award, which will be decided by

young readers across the island of Ireland.

Speaking at the shortlist announcement, Johnny Hanna, Partner in Charge KPMG Belfast said: "This incredible shortlist shows off the talent and creativity of the writers and illustrators of children's books. KPMG is delighted to be sponsoring the awards for the sixth time - reflecting our support for helping promote the enjoyment of reading in children."

Call for Junior Juries

Children's Books Ireland is also calling on school classes, youth groups, early childhood settings and book clubs across the island of Ireland to participate in its Junior Juries' programme, designed to encourage reading for joy and an appreciation of a wide range of books. Interested groups can register at the Children's Books Ireland website to select suitable titles

from the shortlist and send their feedback and scores to Children's Books Ireland. The winning artist will accept the Junior Juries' Award at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards in Dublin on 19th May.

The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards and Junior Juries' programme are supported by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland National Lottery Funding.

Damian Smyth, joint Head of Literature and Drama at the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, said: "The books we connect with in childhood are often the ones which we hold in our hearts for life and these annual awards recognise some of the most outstanding books published in the last year across a range of age categories and genres. Congratulations to all of the immensely talented writers and illustrators who have made this year's shortlist."



Wicklow-based author Eilish Fisher.

Moxie Brawl present Punk Alley at Mermaid Arts Centre

Saturday 1st March, 11am & 2pm.
Tickets: €12 / €40 (Family of 4)

These are family-friendly, relaxed performances, which are Irish Sign Language interpreted. There's a pre-show orientation available for those who might need it and access notes of what to expect are available on our website.

Enter the world of the Lazurr Tuts, a world-famous, guitar wielding, foot stomping punk band

made up of misfits and outcasts. They are in the business of making music and speaking out, and you

have been invited into an exclusive rehearsal. Dance, sing, shout, whisper, stomp, spin, sign

and shake with the Lazurr Tuts on a journey of self-expression. No matter how loud or soft, the Lazurr Tuts want you to know that what you have to say is important. Set your inner anarchist free and celebrate the joys of being you in a safe, caring environment in which everyone is equal.

Punk Alley is a show full of heart that asks big

questions, creating a vibrant and fun space for young people to explore what they want to use

their voice to fight for. The show is a relaxed performance and is fully ISL interpreted and everyone

is invited to participate in creating songs, writing placards, and playing music. It's electric, live

and anything could happen. Book through mermaidartscentre.ie or call Box Office 01 272 4030.



Moxie Brawl present Punk Alley.

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Bonhoeffer (Special Preview Screening)

Whale Theatre, Thursday 27th February, 8pm (doors 7pm)
 Tickets €20 and available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550.

In the tumultuous backdrop of World War II, emerges the compelling true story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a man of profound ideals caught in the crossfire of history. As the world teeters on the brink, Bonhoeffer, an advocate of love, grapples with a moral dilemma that transcends the ordinary. With stakes soaring to global proportions, ideals collide, convictions are tested, and a man's legacy becomes a testament to the indomitable spirit of humanity.

Driven Snow: A Night of Dreaming

Whale Theatre, Saturday 1st March 8pm (doors 7pm) Sold out but register at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for returns.

Driven Snow are husband and wife Kieran and Emily, celebrated Irish musicians who have played with Delorentos (Kieran) and Republic Of Loose (Emily). This is a very special once-off night celebrating Driven Snow's album "A Kind Of Dreaming" with music, visual art, and spoken word. A 5-piece band, plus very special guests, tell the stories and perform the songs on Emily & Kieran's celebrated debut album. Special guests include Peter Baxter (acoustic), Shane Langan (spoken word) & Andrea Cullen (visual art)



Danny O' Brien: 'Killa-Dan-Jaro'

Whale Theatre, Friday 28th February 8pm (doors 7pm)
 Sold out but register at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 for returns.

After a complete sell-out run at The Edinburgh Fringe and as well as several Irish and International Festivals with his new show, multi-award-winning Wicklovian comedian Danny O' Brien returns to The Whale Theatre with a high-octane stand-up show like no other bringing the BIG laughs all over Ireland and beyond!

From getting scammed by a fake landlord in Edinburgh to climbing several peaks around the globe (Including Kilimanjaro in Tanzania)

This is definitely O'Brien's biggest, best and most exciting show to date! He has toured over 60 tour dates globally this past year, sold out Liberty Hall Theatre in Dublin, released a TV special and headlined at various international comedy festivals to worldwide audiences. Danny's last show sold out 2 nights in a row at The Whale last year so book fast- this is one stand-up hour you do NOT want to miss!

"O' Brien took to the stage like a force of nature... one suspects it won't be too much longer before stadiums come calling" - *The Examiner*



Dee Harkin and Clare Stevenson pictured during rehearsals with Session 55 in Ashford Heritage Centre last Friday. The musical group is for people aged 55 and over.

Love Your Coast photography competition opens for entries

An Taisce's Clean Coasts Programme invites Irish photographers to fall in love with the coast with the return of the Love Your Coast photography competition for 2025.



William Murphys image titled 'An Fear Marbh agus an Fear ag Eitilt' was the overall 'Photo of the Year' winner in the Clean Coasts 2024 Love Your Coast photography competition. The image also won the 'People and the Coast' category. The image displays Inis Tuaisceart Island, also known as the Dead Man or the Sleeping Giant, with a human focal point soaring high in the sky above.



Lisa Farrell came first place in the 'Wildlife' category as part of the 2024 Clean Coasts Love Your Coast Photography Competition. "Peeping Tom" taken at Whitestrand Beach, Milltown Malbay, Co. Clare is a rare capture of a stoat peeping out over the rocks.



Joe Silke came first place in the 'Heritage on the Coast' category as part of the 2024 Clean Coasts Love Your Coast Photography Competition. "Fisherman's Hut" taken in Connemara, Galway captures an ancient cottage beside one of the many loughs in South Connemara.

Building on Clean Coasts' 2025 theme of connection, the competition encourages photographers to capture the intersection of Ireland's captivating coastal beauty, rich heritage, and biodiversity, alongside the deep bond shared by those dedicated to protecting and preserving these vital blue spaces. This year we are asking photographers to think about how spending time by the coast fosters a deeper connection to ourselves, nature, and our communities when taking their photos.

Now in its 16th year, the Love Your Coast competition consistently draws hundreds of photographers from all over the country every year. With a prize fund of €5000, Love Your Coast offers photographers the opportunity to showcase their talent across five distinct categories. Each category of the Love Your Coast photography competition highlights different aspects of Ireland's coastal environment, celebrating our unique coastline. From tranquil waves, dramatic cliffs, and golden sands to vibrant coastal communities, diverse marine wildlife, and rich her-



Eabha A. Hughes image took 1st place in the 'Underwater Category' with "Peek-A-Boo!" which they captured at Pollock Holes, Kilkee, Clare. The shot brilliantly captures a rare red blenny skilfully camouflaging among the coral.

itage, each category offers a chance to showcase the beauty and significance of the Irish coast:

1. Coastal Landscape
2. Connecting with the Coast
3. Source to Sea
4. Wildlife and the Coast
5. Underwater

These categories invite photographers to capture the diverse and breathtaking elements of Ireland's coastline, celebrating its natural wonders and the vital connection between people and the sea, taken within the last 36 months.

To support participants, Clean Coasts will provide helpful res-

ources and guidelines to improve their skills and submissions. This includes a detailed guide with tips from the competition judges and information on each category which will be published on its website.

Bronagh Moore, Clean Coasts Programme Manager, said: "Given our theme this year is 'Connection', we thought Valentine's Day was the perfect day to launch the Love Your Coast photography competition. As an island nation we have always had a special connection with the sea and what better way to celebrate that relationship than to capture it, in all its glory, through a

camera lens. The coast is always there waiting for us, giving us joy and energy, and always makes us feel better when we spend time with it, which is a lot more than can be said for some of our Valentine choices! We had some fantastic entries last year and we're really looking forward to seeing how our photographers capture their love for the coast in 2025."

For more information about Love Your Coast and to submit your entries, please visit <https://cleancoasts.org/our-initiatives/love-your-coast/>

The closing date for entries is May 14th.



John Hooton came first place in the 'Coastal Landscape' category as part of the 2024 Clean Coasts Love Your Coast Photography Competition with "Fog on the 3 sisters" taken at Clogher Head, Dingle, Co. Kerry; his image captures the fog over the distinctive three sisters in the background.

IMNDA launches annual 'Drink Tea for MND'



Tony Ryan and his partner Amanda Lillis.

As a nation of tea lovers - now's your chance to get together, sip some tea, and make a difference as the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association (IMNDA) has announced the launch of its annual Drink Tea for MND campaign, which will take place throughout the month of March 2025.

Now in its 16th year, this nationwide initiative encourages individuals, businesses, and communities to host their own tea parties, with all funds raised supporting IMNDA's critical services for families affected by Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

As the IMNDA marks 40 years in 2025, the Drink Tea for MND campaign is a fun and simple way to get involved and show your support for families affected by MND, whether you're hosting a small gathering at home or organising a larger event at work or in your local community.

Tony Ryan and his partner Amanda Lillis, from Pallasgreen Co. Limerick, who are this year's ambassadors for the campaign, shared their personal story to highlight the importance of the IMNDA's

work. Tony, known affectionately as Schillaci, was diagnosed with MND in April 2022 after a year-long journey of tests, referrals, and waiting. Tony and Amanda have four children: Corey (28), Tonieka (25), Zekeisha (17), and Zantianna (12).

Amanda shared: "MND is a cruel disease that takes so much away, yet we are determined to make the most of every day. For Tony, the hardest part is not being able to do the things he used to do on his own. But the support we've received from the IMNDA has been a lifeline. It's not just the practical help; it's the emotional support, the funding for equipment, and the people who truly care. We need more awareness, so others like us can find the help they need."

"When we recently went to buy clothes,

we had a humiliating experience where we were told that Tony couldn't bring someone into the fitting room to help him. It's an example of how MND isn't always visible to others, but the struggles are real. We hope that by sharing our story, more people will understand MND and why fundraising is so crucial. The IMNDA has been a key part of our journey, and we are so grateful for all they do."

This year's campaign will see supporters gathering across Ireland, hosting events from small family teas to larger community fundraisers. With every cup of tea enjoyed, the IMNDA will continue to provide essential services to families like Tony and Amanda's, ensuring that no one faces MND alone. The IMNDA relies heavily on fundraising to sustain over 85% of its income, which funds vital sup-

port services, including care grants, counselling, and equipment to improve the quality of life for those affected by MND.

How to get involved:

- Register for your Drink Tea for MND event at IMNDA's website.
- Host your own tea party in March, invite your friends, family, or colleagues, and raise much-needed funds.
- Share your event on social media using the hashtag #DrinkTeaForMND to spread awareness.

Tony and Amanda's message is clear: "Every cup of tea, every event, and every donation brings us closer to a world where MND is understood, and families get the support they need."

For more information or to register your tea party, visit IMNDA's Drink Tea for MND page.

Wicklow women featured in National Museum project on community midwives

People in Co. Wicklow are being invited to contribute stories and memories about community midwives in the 19th and 20th century as part of a project led by the National Museum of Ireland. The stories can be submitted to a national history and heritage archive, available at ouririshheritage.org.

The lives and contributions of some Wicklow nurses and midwives have already been incorporated into an ongoing exhibition and events programme exploring the history of rural midwifery at the National Museum in Turlough Park, Co. Mayo.

"We'd like to hear from more people in Co. Wicklow and across

Ireland to further expand on this community-led historical research into midwifery," explained Lorna Elms, iCAN Development Officer with the National Museum.

"Community midwives provided a vital network of healthcare provision for women in rural Ireland - sustaining the lives of mothers and babies during

birth - often in very challenging conditions. The exhibition and archive project acknowledges and celebrates their contributions."

Members of a number of Wicklow-based history and heritage groups have already contributed research to the project. Groups featured include Roundwood Historical

Society; Blessington Historical Society; Donard Imaal History; Vartry Heritage Forum; and Wicklow Audio Visual Archive. The groups are part of the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) - an initiative by the National Museum of Ireland, the Heritage Council and participating local authority Heritage Officers across Ireland.

Therese Hicks, from Roundwood Historical Society, is set to deliver a talk on her research on the topic at the National

Museum in Turlough Park to celebrate International Women's Day on 8th March 2025. There will talk about Catherine Hayes Magee, who trained as a midwife and nurse in Liverpool and returned to Wicklow to take up the position of Jubilee Nurse for Roundwood, in the late 1930s. To hear from Therese and other local historians on their research into community midwives, visit www.museum.ie and book a place at the upcoming event for International Women's Day on 8th March. Alternatively, telephone (094) 90 31751 or email BookingsCountryLife@museum.ie.

Visit the exhibition at

Turlough Park or ouririshheritage.org to contribute your own stories or memories of midwives in your area.



RECRUITMENT

Exciting roles supporting autistic people

We are currently recruiting for various roles in our Residential, Day and Respite services in Ashford and Bray, Co. Wicklow and Gorey, Co. Wexford.

We are also recruiting for additional positions in our Residential, Respite and Day services across Dublin and Kildare.

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Purple House to expand childhood cancer services

Purple House Cancer Support announced on International Childhood Cancer Day (February 15th) that it is expanding its Childhood Cancer Services. The expansion will include the addition of two additional new roles, a child & adolescent counsellor, and a family support worker, which will be based at the Purple House HQ on Duncairn Tee in Bray.

Children with a cancer diagnosis, as well as children impacted by a cancer diagnosis from many counties in Leinster and beyond will benefit from the National Cancer Control Programme approved programmes and services that are provided by Purple House.

Teresa Grant, Child & Family Services Coordinator at Purple House says: "At Purple House, the voice of the child is paramount and the services we provide to children, young people and families are based on the needs of each individual that walks through the purple door. We pride ourselves on the ability to listen to, and involve children, young people and their parents and carers in the decision making in relation to their care."

Conor O'Leary, Director of Operations at Purple House says: "We are delighted to make this announcement on International Childhood Cancer Day, which will be a further expansion of the services we provide free of charge to children living with cancer. These new roles will be based at Purple House Cancer Support with Teresa Grant and her Child & Family Services Team, and will be a lifeline for children, helping them to cope with the trauma of a cancer diagnosis and enabling them to live a life to the fullest. We will never stop pushing forward."

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION Sought for:
 1. Proposed First Floor Extension (102Msq) Over Existing 2 bed Single Storey Dwelling.
 New First Floor to Accommodate 3 No. Bedrooms and Associated Facilities, totalling 204Msq. Existing Dwelling 102 Msq.
 2. All ancillary site works at 'Leenan' (A98 FH59), Rear of Rhoda Cottage, Putland Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow. Signed: Annette Doyle.
 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

Richard Hegarty seeks permission for the conversion of the existing attic space to new storage space (Non-Habitable Status), 3 no. rooflights to the front of the house, new stairs & all associated works at 52 Glenheron Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, A63 XE82. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Stephen and Cathy Pearson seek permission and retention permission for:
 The demolition of 36m² of the Existing 108m² Garage as built contrary to approved designs as granted under planning reference 94532 at The Fallows, Ashtown Lane, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow A98 AK57 along with the Retention of the Remaining 72m² of the Existing Garage. The Existing Garage is used for private vehicle storage, garden maintenance machinery & equipment storage, fuel storage and the roof of the Garage is fitted with solar panels for energy generation. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

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Calling Wicklow entrepreneurs

Deadline fast approaching for nominations for 2025 EY Entrepreneur of the Year

The deadline for nominations for the 2025 EY Entrepreneur Of The Year (EOY) programme is just over one week away on Thursday, February 27th. Entrepreneurs from emerging, established, and international businesses operating across all industry sectors in Wicklow are invited to submit their nominations by 27th Feb 2025.



The deadline for nominations for the 2025 EY Entrepreneur of The Year (EOY) programme is 27th Feb 2025. Pictured at the launch (l-r): Eimear McCrann, Director, EY Entrepreneur of The Year, EY Entrepreneurs of The Year 2024, Orlaith Ryan and Sharon Cunningham of Shorla Oncology, Roger Wallace, Partner Lead for EY Entrepreneur of The Year. Photograph: Naoise Culhane.

This year, the programme celebrates entrepreneurs from across the island of Ireland whose vision and innovation are creating long-term value and helping to shape the future with confidence. Business leaders that have the tenacity and determination to push conventional boundaries, think differently and create new solutions that change our collective future for the better are being encouraged to apply.

EOY Alumni and 2014 Finalist, Bill Walsh commented: "The EY Entrepreneur of the Year programme is such a positive and rewarding experience that offers so many benefits to participating entrepreneurs. I have gained so much from being involved and

have forged lasting friendships and connections with inspirational entrepreneurs from a wide range of industries. I would encourage any Wicklow based entrepreneurs who may be considering getting involved to go for it!"

Roger Wallace, Partner Lead for EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Ireland said: "We are very excited to invite entrepreneurs from across Ireland to submit their nominations for the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2025 programme. Now in its 28th year, the purpose of the programme is to acclaim, inspire and encourage entrepreneurship across our island.

"Geopolitics, technology and environmental concerns are redefining our world. Irish entrepreneurs are leaning into the uncertainty that the modern-day business world presents and are identifying and realising opportunities for growth and innovation. Through their ingenuity, resilience and vision, Irish entrepreneurs are future proofing the prosperity of our island and our people. They are shaping their future and the future of our island with confidence.

"Over the almost three decades that we have



The overall winning team in the Wicklow Lions Quiz Night held in O'Shea's in Wicklow on Thursday last John and Sinead Finlay Tomas Dimitrovich and Alex Ludgate. This coming Thursday the Big Quiz will move to the beautiful surroundings of Wicklow Golf Club. Three important charities will be supported by the local Lions Club St Patrick's Church Choir The Glebe School and Wicklow Rugby Under 12's. The following week Feb 6 the Grand Final will take place once again in Wicklow Golf Club. This promises to be the biggest night of the year when all 20 charities involved will receive cheques from the Lions Club at the end of a very successful Quiz season. All supported charities during the season are expected to organise at least two tables each on the night plus the usual quizzers. It is advisable to come along early as space will be limited.

been running this programme in Ireland, we have seen first-hand just how impressively diverse the entrepreneurial community is on this island, and we are actively seeking and encouraging nominations from entrepreneurs of all ages and from all industries and locations across the country.

"There will be 24 finalists selected to take part in this year's programme, who will participate in an exciting strategic growth programme over a 10-month period, including a week-long CEO Retreat to Tokyo, Japan. The finalists will also be welcomed into our acclaimed alumni community of more than 600 of Ireland's greatest and most successful entrepreneurs, where they will have the opportunity to forge valuable connections, learn from each other and in many cases do business together."

International Women's Day
CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT WICKLOW GOLF CLUB
 FRIDAY 7TH MARCH 2025
 BEGINNERS 2½ hour GOLF CLINIC with Louise D'Arcy PGA Professional or OPEN 13 HOLE SHOTGUN SCRAMBLE for h/cap golfers
 €30 per golfer - Buffet Lunch included
 Golf Clinic only - €20 per golfer
 10am meet at Club house for tea/coffee & scones
 11am Golf/Clinic followed by lunch
 To book any of the above Call the Office on 0404 67379 Ext 1
 Or Email: info@wicklowgolfclub.ie

CLASSIFIEDS

Gospel: John 3:16-18

Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world; instead, through him the world is to be saved. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned. He who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

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 • In Blessington we are parked in the square, near the Lemon Tree (which is now closed)
 Starting Wednesday, we are in Newtownmountkennedy from 9am until 1.30pm. Parking somewhere on the main street - come find us!

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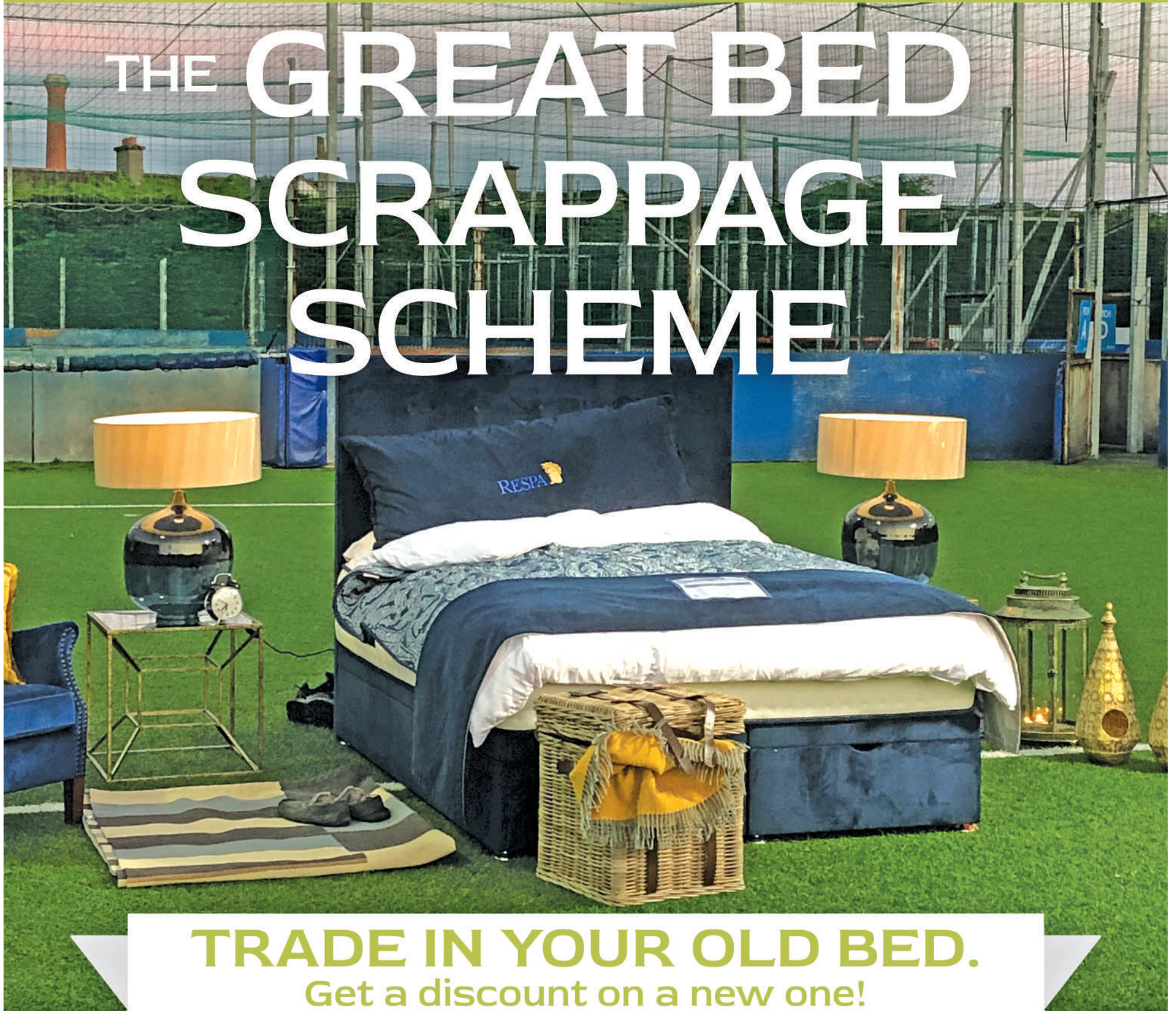
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