

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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LOCAL HISTORY
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TACKLING HOMELESSNESS
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Tuesday 15th April 2025 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray, A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

MAYHEM PREDICTED

Last Thursday and Friday evenings hundreds of residents from estates on the Herbert Road in Bray turned out to protest at the decision to close Herbert Road. Their anger and frustration was palpable.

Speaking to Wicklow Times residents asserted “Why is democracy being ignored? All 32 county co-councillors voted against this closure, all TDs are opposed to it, the Taniste says he is against it, and local business and tourist venues are also opposed to it.

“We got oirechtas letters from Simon Harris confirming that he supports us but he is in a position of power and

could reverse the decision.”

The Bray and District Chamber of Commerce is seriously concerned at the apparent intention of the Local Authority and the National Transport Authority (NTA) to close the Herbert Road junction.

Kieran Ward, President Bray & District Chamber of Commerce said “We strongly oppose this move because of its Impact on Traffic Flow: The clo-

sure of one of only four key access and egress points to Bray will inevitably cause increased congestion both within the town and on major surrounding routes such as the Southern Cross and the Dublin/Bray Road. This will lead to longer delays and higher costs for businesses operating in Bray. It will also adversely affect tourism. Bray already experiences significant traffic challenges during



Harlie Hayden, Eve Keegan and Ivy O'Hanlon at the St. Joseph's National School Newtown Talent Show in the Parkview Hotel. Pic: Michael Kelly.

Cllr. Melanie CORRIGAN
FINE GAEL



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weekends and peak summer periods due to the high volume of day visitors. Removing Herbert Road as an access point will only worsen the situation, making Bray less accessible and potentially deterring visitors.

“There is growing frustration among residents who feel their voices are being ignored. A consultation process that disregards the opinions of those consulted undermines the credibility of public engagement.

“It is unacceptable that the expressed concerns of local elected representatives are not being considered in the decision-making process.

“The Chamber calls on the authorities to release the cost-benefit analysis that justifies this decision. Any proposal with such significant consequences for

residents and businesses alike must be grounded in transparent and evidence-based reasoning.

Bray Chamber urges the authorities to genuinely consider the views of the local community, as expressed through public consultation and their elected representatives. The Herbert Road junction should remain open.”

The County Council is not for turning. In a statement issued last week, it said “Wicklow County Council is progressing the development of the N11/M11 Bus Priority Interim Scheme (N11/M11 BPIS) in partnership with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the National Transport Authority and the Department of Transport. Wicklow County Council is seeking to address the current

operation and safety issues on the N11/M11 corridor as a priority.

“The N11/M11 BPIS project began in 2020 and aims to deliver bus

priority measures on the N11/M11 in advance of *Continued on page 3*

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European Union European Regional Development Fund

Macs Fish

Family-run business Macs Fish will be changing their dates outside the Church in Kilcoole, starting on Friday 1st May they will be there on Fridays instead of Thursdays at the same time - 9:30am to 2pm. Macs Fish get their fresh fish from Kilmore Quay.

Roundwood Historical Society

James Scannell will give a talk on 'John Hinde and his Colour County Wicklow Postcards' in Roundwood Parish Hall, on Tuesday 22nd April at 8pm. In this talk, local historian James Scannell will trace the origin of the picture postcard, providing examples of the types of colour picture postcards circulating in County Wicklow in the 1950s prior to the arrival of John Hinde on the scene. In the 1950s, the quality of colour picture postcards left a lot to be desired. However, John Hinde, had a clear vision of what a colour picture postcard should look like, from image composition to colour reproduction and finish.

The talk will discuss the John Hinde technique which revolutionised how colour picture postcards looked and were produced, and the effect that his technique had on his competitors, in an era when modern day computer technology did not exist. The talk will conclude with a selection of John Hinde colour picture postcard views of various County Wicklow locations as they looked like some 60 years ago and, using more modern images of these locations, he will show how these places have changed in appearance over this passage of time. Admission is just €3 for members and €5 for non-members. Existing and New Members are Welcome.

Easter Eggstravaganza

Common Ground is a community development group based in Aldoborough & HawkinsWood in Greystones. It's a community of social and private housing with an estimated population of 1,200 residents. Common Ground hosted four well received and successful events last year and are passionate about creating vibrant and inclusive events throughout the year on a wonderful space in the heart of our homes called Common Ground. This year's program of events include: Easter Eggstravaganza - April 21st. 12 -2pm; Street Feast - June 2nd. 1 - 3pm; Harvest Festival; August 25th. 1 - 3pm; Halloween Party, October 31st. 5 - 7pm. This year's Easter Event will include Live Music, Refreshments, Egg Hunt. Lawn Games, Face Painting, Soccer Camp, Soft Play Area, Picnic, and a dog show hosted by Barks & Bubbles.

Birdwatch Ireland AGM

On May 13th the Wicklow branch AGM will be held just before the May talk. At the AGM the annual election for committee members will take place. A number of committee members are stepping down to pursue other interests. As a result there are a number of vacancies on the committee. Birdwatch Ireland said "We are calling on the people on the mailing list who are BirdWatch Ireland members to consider putting their names forward to join the committee to help run the branch. If you would like to know more about committee roles and tasks please send an email to birdwatch-wicklow@gmail.com or reach out to any of the committee at our upcoming events."

Wicklow Town Heritage Trail - a key attraction for locals and visitors for Easter Weekend

The Annual weekly guided walk of the new Wicklow Town Heritage Trail commences on Easter Saturday, and will be a key attraction for tourists visiting the town for Easter Weekend and provides a great insight into the rich heritage of the town.

The now well-established Heritage Trail last year attracted an increased number of tourists and a significant interest from newcomers to the area anxious to immerse themselves fully in their understanding of their local heritage & history. Locals, Visitors and Tourists are all welcome to take part in what is a very informative trail detailing the rich history of Wicklow Town.

This trail will commence from outside the Tourist office in Fitzwilliam Square at 11am and will take approximately 2 hours to complete, allowing participants to spend some time at each location.

These guided trails will continue each Saturday morning from Easter Saturday until 27th September

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

- The story of Robert Halpin who laid the first trans-Atlantic cable.
- The history of the Church of Ireland in Church Hill.
- The history of the 12th century Franciscan Abbey.
- The story of the construction and history of St Patricks Church.
- The Halpin Monument on Market Square.

Their will be a weekly guided trail each

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

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



Grant for Commemorations research open to historians

The Minister for Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport, Patrick O'Donovan T.D., has announced the opening of this year's Commemorations grant, in partnership with the Royal Irish Academy.

The Commemorations Bursary Scheme was established to encourage and support new local research and local history studies relating to the commemoration of events associated with the early years of the State as well as other significant historical anniversaries, events and themes.

Minister O'Donovan welcomed the opening of the scheme saying: "I am delighted my department can support the 2025 Commemorations Bursary, managed by the Royal Irish Academy, in honour of the late Dr. Eamon Phoenix. This initiative reflects our

commitment to deepening our understanding of the early years of the State and other relevant anniversaries and themes and supporting scholars and researchers in their vital work. Dr. Phoenix was a distinguished historian who brought our past to life with insight and integrity, and it is my hope that this bursary will help others follow in his footsteps.

In this, the second year of the scheme, applications will be invited for funding amounts ranging from €1,500 to €10,000. The bursaries will be awarded to individual researchers across a wide range of themes which recognise the importance of the commemoration of events. Last year saw grants awarded to fourteen researchers across a broad variety of research topics including

'Stories from the Statue: A century of continuity and change in a rural, south Sligo townland' and 'All That Jazz - exploring Mohill area's traditional music scene in the lead up and following the anti-jazz campaign of 1934'. Full details of the successful projects from 2024 can be found here on the RIA website.

Applications opened on Friday 4th April. For further information and scheme guidelines, please visit www.ria.ie where a list of suggested research themes to assist applicants has also been provided. The closing date for applications is Thursday, 15th May at 5pm.

Tribute to Santiago

On Saturday 5th April various volunteer groups gathered in beautiful sunshine at South Quay in Wicklow to unveiling a special bench with an inscription dedicated to everyone's friend Santiago 'Jimmy' Balbontin.

Initiated by Wicklow & District Lions Club as Santiago was a long standing and respected member for 30 years and served as President during his long service.

There was also a huge representation from the local RNLI where Jimmy served for many years as chairman of the fundraising committee.

Sean Olohan thanked everyone for coming to show their respect to a wonderful man. He also thanked Georgina



Franey for making it all possible.

He thanked his Lions colleague Jim Molloy for his help with the newly planted flower-

work preparing the whole area before the unveiling for Santiago.

A long time friend during his time in Wicklow Father Pat O'Rourke travelled from his new parish in Dublin to officially unveil the bench and bless the area. Fr Gérard from the Wicklow parish also attended.

Afterwards the RNLI hospitality ladies treated the large crowd to very welcome teas and coffees and tasty goodies.

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The recent coffee morning for Purple House Cancer Support held at McCabe's Pharmacy was a huge success, raising €3,000 with the help of the local Bray community. The event also coincided with Liz Hipple's retirement day. Liz said she would like to thank other local shops for their donations and support and spot prizes; Liz Anne's and Molloy's Coffee and bakery, and Henry from The Larder, and Donal Hipple for his food platters.

WICKLOW
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Councillors back Behan proposal to halt Herbert Road junction closure

A motion proposed by Independent Councillor Joe Behan to halt the proposal to close the Herbert Road junction in Bray was passed unanimously by all councillors present at last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council.

A presentation was given at the meeting on the publication of the Options Selections Report (Phase 2 of TII Project Management Guidelines) that recommends the preferred option for the N11/M11 Bus Priority Interim Scheme.

Following the presentation, Cllr Behan said "this crazy proposal is not just coming from the Council, it's coming from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), it's coming from the Kildare County Council roads office believe it or not, and it's coming from The Department of Transport. So it's a Government proposal. Common sense would tell you that this will be an absolute disaster for the people of Bray and surrounding areas and anyone travelling south who has nothing to do with Bray.

"This is being brought about because the previous Government decided to divert money away from widening the N11. This current Government appear to be continuing with the policy of not widening the road but instead putting buses on the hard shoulder. Effectively I think the entire process needs to be



Cllr Joe Behan.

stopped. The reason I am making that suggestion is because if money starts to get spent on consultants who will spend the next two years designing this massive scheme which has no public support it will be too late to stop it then. It has no support from the public representatives in Bray and it has no public support from the people of Bray and North Wicklow."

Cllr Behan's proposal, seconded by Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien, asks that the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council pauses any further action on the interim bus priority

scheme and writes to the Minister for Transport and Tánaiste Simon Harris asking the Government to review the entire scheme to allow the Herbert Road access to the N11 to continue.

Cllr Melanie Corrigan at last Monday's Wicklow County Council Meeting stated she fully supported the rejecting of the plan to close the Herbert Road, and was fully behind the campaign to stop it.

Cllr Corrigan stated she was concerned about the safety issues that the closure would create. If there were to be a major incident in the town there would be difficulty in getting emergency vehicles into the area, she said.

She also stated that this closure will not only affect the people living in Bray but also those studying, visiting and working in the town.

"Bray relies on its tourism trade, and the recent good weather has already seen queues on the N11 trying to access the seafront, there is also Kilruddery gardens a major tourist attraction, as well as all the employment in the area which would

have a knock on affect of it being more difficult to access the town."

She does however welcome some elements of the scheme: "The proposed upgrading of junction 7 at Hollybrook with a new underpass and road alignment should happen regardless of the scheme to improve the traffic flow and queuing at this junction."

She also welcomes the proposed parallel roads at Kilmacanogue bringing traffic onto Glencormick to access the N11 and the parallel road at the Enniskerry exit bringing traffic onto the Fassaroe exit, and she is glad to see the R117 not being closed off.

Cllr Corrigan commended the organisers of the campaign to stop the proposal and will be working with colleagues to make sure the views of the people of are heard and listened to.

Local barrister and Bray Councillor Malachai Duddy MCC - while he supports the increased roll-out of public transport improvements - saays "Despite the unanimous opposition of Wicklow County Councillors the

project which includes the proposed closure of the Herbert Road junction with the N11 is being progressed at national level by Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the National Transport Authority. Only local TD An Tánaiste Simon Harris and the Minister for Transport Darragh O'Brien TD can stop this madness which so far has cost approximately €5 million. How many more millions of euro of public money will be spent before this proposal to close the Herbert Road Junction is halted?"

At last week's meeting of Wicklow County Council Cllr. Malachai Duddy told the meeting "The proposal to close the N11/Herbert Road junction is over engineered and not people focused. The closing of the Herbert Road would be drastic and devastating to the people of Bray. Following over 1,000 submissions from local people, and the signing of a petition by over 4,000 this proposal ignores the many local voices and local knowledge as to what is best for the people who live around Herbert Road, not to mention the many users of the

road. The tens of millions that this project will cost would be put to much better use extending the Luas to Bray and beyond. The temporary closure of the Herbert Road at Kilbride in 2023 caused havoc, when significant funds were spent on the road. The proposed closure of the N11/Herbert Road Junction means this expenditure is a waste of money. The proposed N11/M11 Bus Priority Interim Scheme, with no proposed bus stops between Loughlinstown and Kilmacanogue brings no benefit to the people of Bray, who are paying an enormous price in losing one of four exits off the M11/N11."

Cllr. Duddy also expressed concern that such a development would have on the adjacent St Bridget's Chapel of Ease at Kilbride, a protected structure number B27, dating to 1860, as well as on the active Church of Ireland congregation that worships there.

Cllr Duddy adds, "The ARUP engineers were unable to give statistics about the number of accidents at the N11 Herbert Road junction despite



Cllr Malachai Duddy.

using the avoidance of accidents at this conflict point as an argument for closing the junction."

Cllr. Duddy asked that the Bray members of Wicklow County Council would meet with the Wicklow County Chief Executive Emer O'Gorman to ensure an intervention at national level to bring common sense to keeping the N11 Herbert Road junction open before tens of millions of euros of taxpayers money is wasted.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Emer O'Gorman said "I am more than happy to write to the Tánaiste and

the Minister for Transport outlining what the members have articulated today and to look for the reinstatement of the full scheme but I do think that this report has to be published. I think far too much time and money has been spent to walk away from a process that we're in now [...]

We need to be able to give commuters a viable alternative to the car. [...] TII are the approving body on this, it is not a matter for this chamber to decide on. It is not a matter for me to decide on. TII ultimately will decide whether any project goes ahead on the N11."

Aontú leading protest march against Herbert Road closure

Local Aontú advocate Ciarán Hogan is leading a protest on Tuesday May 16th against the closure of Herbert Road to the N11. The public who oppose this are invited to walk the entire length of Herbert Road in Bray and ending at the municipal district council meeting in the town hall above McDonald's.

Hogan who has been campaigning against the closure for some time said "This plan has no benefits to Bray; a bus lane that will bypass the town and cut off one of the 5 routes out of the town is unacceptable. I was very vocal about it during the local

and general elections as a candidate. I met with many of the Herbert Road residents and completely understand their anger. Aontú doesn't believe in political violence and condemn anyone who does, but there are issues that require a political and

peaceful way to show your indignation."

Details of the new plan were unveiled at the Bray council meeting held on the 1st of April, which retain the closure of Herbert Road, to the great anger of many Bray residents. A facebook group

called "Stop the closure of Herbert Road" has amassed over 1500 members after just a week, and many more are still joining. Another protest outside the Wicklow County Council meeting held Monday 7th April managed around 150 attendees at the lunchtime event.

"I don't believe planners fully understand what this will do to the already dire traffic situa-

tion in Bray. We do support new bus infrastructure and there are some elements of this plan that will help Bray, but the residents have concensus that closing the Herbert road is not part of any plan they will accept," continued Mr Hogan

The route of the march will start at Kilbride Church where Herbert

road meets the N11, and will proceed along the road passing Ashton Wood, Thornbrook, Richmond Park, Pemberton, Rectory Slopes, Kilbride Lane, Ardmore Wood, Kilarney lane, Millers wood, Killarney glen, Glenwood, and King Edward estates, as well as Ardmore Studios and Holy Redeemer car

park. All of which will be massively affected by the closure.

The march will stop on Quinsborough Road for few speeches before travelling up Bray Main Street to end at the Bray council chamber in time for the May monthly meeting. The whole march is expected to take around 1 hour 15 minutes

walking at a low moderate pace.

"We acknowledge that all the Bray councillors have already spoken out against this closure, now we're showing them the full extent of the residents' frustration and ask them to be furious and uncompromising in halting this plan," concluded Hogan.

MAYHEM PREDICTED

Continued from page 1



the more comprehensive Junction 4 to Junction 14 scheme. The scheme aims to increase the people carrying capacity and attractiveness of public transport along the route and also includes proposals to enhance the operation and safety of the N11. The priority facilities will allow buses and coaches to avoid congested traffic lanes during the peak traffic periods, whilst remaining as hard-shoulders during non-operational time periods.

"The bus priority measures include the widening and realignment of hard shoulders to accommodate buses during peak periods. Closing intermediate junctions and access points will maximize this priority for public transport.

Additionally, reducing these access points will decrease traffic weaving, intermittent traffic slowing and braking all of which disrupts traffic flows and contributes greatly to peak period traffic congestion. By rationalising the access points to the N11, the scheme will provide significant benefits for overall traffic flow and safety for all road users. Wicklow County Council is committed to ensuring that the closure of each direct access point is considered carefully. The implementation of these major road improvement features will improve journey times for the residents of East Wicklow.

"In particular, Wicklow County Council will only accept the closure of Herbert Road based only on this closure being coupled with

and facilitated by the major upgrade of Junction 7 Bray South (Hill's Garage to Kileroney Lane). Currently, Junction 7 Bray South experiences severe congestion, and it is acknowledged that currently Herbert Road provides an alternative route that bypasses this current congestion. The situation that transpired during a temporary closure of Herbert Road in 2023 is one that WCC aims to avoid. That situation has very much informed the preferred option that now includes a major upgrade at Hill's Garage/Junction 7 to a fully grade separated junction including new slip roads and underpass. These upgrades will relieve queuing and congestion on the N11, Killarney Road and Southern Cross Road and while accommodating rerouted traffic from Herbert Road."

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

Coillte and Inland Fisheries Ireland deepen collaboration

Memorandum of Understanding seeks to enhance environmental protection, nature restoration and climate action

Coillte and Fisheries Ireland (IFI), the state environment agency for inland fisheries and sea angling resources have today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will deepen the relationship between the two organisations, and which aims to deliver greater environmental protection and nature restoration projects.

The agreement reflects the evolution of the existing relationship between both Coillte and IFI and works to deliver conservation projects aimed at protecting, enhancing, and restoring important ecosystems across Coillte's forestry estate and Ireland's inland waterways. The MOU will establish the basis for collaborative working to maintain a network of technical and operational managers, exchange data and advice relating to the management of ecosystems and promote scientific and technical cooperation through commissioning mutually beneficial research projects.



Mark Carliun, Managing Director of Coillte Forest, Barry Fox, Head of Operations, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Pat Neville, Communications Manager, Coillte, and Lynda Connor, River Basin District Director, Inland Fisheries Ireland.

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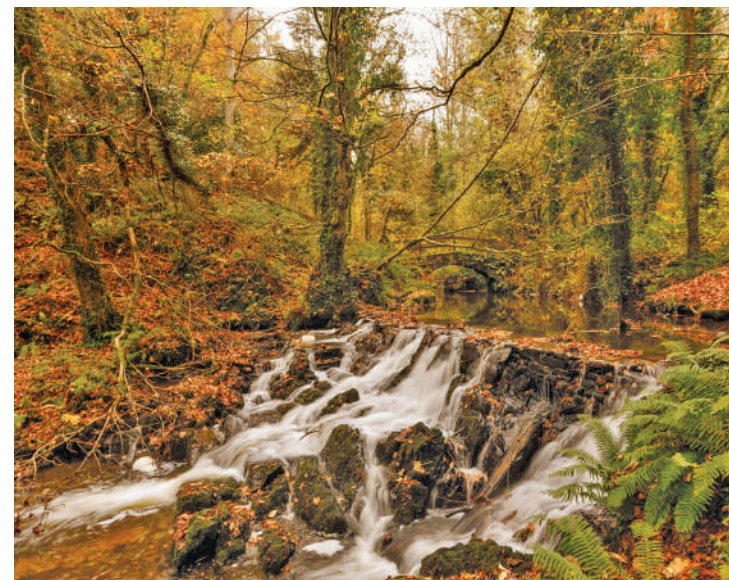
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Dún a Rí Forest Park, Co. Cavan. Photo by James Crombie, INPHO.

"Ireland's fish species, fish habitats, and native forests are key natural resources for the State and must be protected and conserved into the future. I welcome this new alliance between Inland Fisheries Ireland and Coillte.

"The Memorandum of Understanding will pool the expertise of these two important agencies. Our fish stocks, habitats and woodlands will benefit significantly from this shared enterprise, as climate change continues to negatively impact our natural environment."

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Minister Michael-Healy Rae said: "I very much welcome this initiative and the commitment from both Coillte and IFI to working together to enhance the quality of our watercourses and to restore fish habitats. The proposed projects to restore riparian corridors throughout Coillte's estate through native tree area planting aligns with Ireland's strategic vision for forestry which foresees the sustainable protection of our water quality. My

Trees were felled into the river and gravel was deposited behind them to improve the structural diversity with the formation of pools, riffles and glides, and spawning areas for fish and insects.

Appropriately sized, and locally derived gravel was placed in the river channel at strategic points that will improve and create riverbed conditions that facilitates spawning salmon, sea trout and lamprey.

This is essential as water abstraction infrastructure, specifically a dam, at the outflow of the Vartry reservoir upriver near Roundwood prevents the downstream transport and replenishment of naturally occurring gravel.

The gravel size, type (based on local geology), placement, and deposition locations were planned in partnership with IFI to ensure the best possible outcomes of this initiative are achieved.

Minister for Climate, Environment and Energy, Darragh O'Brien TD said:

Department is also supporting native tree area planting for water protection under the Forestry Programme with a view to helping Ireland achieve its objectives in the River Basin Management Plan 2023- 2027. A collaborative approach across society is needed to meet our environmental and climate resilience needs and this MoU between Coillte and IFI is a great example of such co-operation in action.

Mark Carlin, MD of Coillte Forest said: "The protection of nature and the enhancement of natural ecosystems is at the heart of our forests for nature strategic ambitions at Coillte, and I welcome the strengthening of the relationship between Coillte and Inland Fisheries Ireland to deliver projects that do just that. The objective of this MOU aligns perfectly with our own strategic ambitions to balance and deliver the multiple benefits of forests for climate, nature, wood and people.

"This year Coillte will reach the strategic target of increasing the area of our

estate managed primarily for nature from 20% to 30%, and in the long term we are targeting to transform areas of our forests so that 50% of our estate is managed primarily for nature, while continuing to supply sustainably grown Irish wood. Greater collaboration with Inland Fisheries Ireland will complement our forests for nature ambitions."

Barry Fox, Head of Operations at Inland Fisheries Ireland said: "IFI's partnership with Coillte will benefit the State's fish stocks now, and into the future, on a variety of environmental projects. We are joining forces to provide our fish species and watercourses with additional native tree cover along riverbanks to create climate change resilience.

"We're aiming to restore fish habitats to natural conditions, improve water quality, and ensure adequate passage for fish as they migrate. We are committed to cooperating and coordinating on common work areas to enhance our collective environmental and climate action goals."



Barry Fox, Head of Operations, Inland Fisheries Ireland, and Mark Carliun, Managing Director of Coillte Forest.

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Engaging young minds in local history

Wicklow Local Studies Service, along with Colaiste Chill Mhantain secondary school, is excited to announce the launch of 'The Past in My Place', an exhibition of local history projects completed by second-year history students as part of their Junior Certificate curriculum. This marks the second year of this initiative.

The exhibition aims to provide a platform for students to showcase their work while highlighting the fascinating history of the people, places, and events that have shaped County Wicklow. It celebrates the diverse heritage of the school's students and features over 40 displays

on genealogy and local history, ranging from the history of the Jameson family, sawmill owners from Rathnew, to the ancient Eastern Chinese city of Fuqing.

This event is part of the broader Local Studies Schools Programme, which seeks to engage students in exploring the history of their community. The initiative connects local schools with the library's extensive local studies collection to foster a deeper understanding of local heritage and its impact on the present. Through this program, students from both primary and secondary schools have the opportunity to visit the local studies library in Wicklow Town, where they can view and handle historic photographs, books, maps, and newspapers.

Schools also benefit from curriculum-aligned resources that assist students and teachers in completing their Class-Based Assessment (CBA). These resources include activities for historical document analysis and tailored support for educators. Recently, class sets of



Soliat Aroyeun, CCM history teacher Catriona Nolan and Siofra O'Mahoney.



Glenn and Robyn Loughran.

these resources have been distributed to all secondary schools in the county.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Paul O'Brien, stated, "An exhibition like this provides an excellent opportunity for students to connect with their local area and explore their own history. Learning about local and family history can strengthen their sense of identity; instill pride and belonging, and foster deeper connections with their surroundings and community."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, commented, "This exhibition showcases the vital role that local schools and libraries play in discovering, preserving, and celebrating our county's rich heritage and cultural legacy. By bringing local history out of the classroom, we hope to inspire a new generation to appreciate their local heritage and develop key research skills."

The exhibition was launched in the Exhibition Space at Wicklow Town Library on Friday, April 4th, and will be available for viewing until 27th April.



Keeley O'Neill and teacher Nicole McDonnell.



Archivist Catherine Wright, Librarian Geraldine Colgan, Deputy Principal at CCM Catriona Smith, Historian John Goodman, History teacher at CCM Catriona Nolan, teacher Nicile McDonnell and Local Studies Librarian Gerlanda Maniglia at the launch of the Colaiste Chill Mhantain Local History CBA Exhibition in Wicklow Library.



Rian Gledhill, CCM Deputy Principal Catriona Smith and Kai Jameson.

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South Leinster Citizens Information Service/ Co. Wicklow

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Arklow CIC, 73 Lower Main Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow. Tel: 0818 07 6750; Email arklow@citinfo.ie

Alternatively, you can call the Citizens Information Phone Service on 0818 07 4000, Monday to Friday, 9am-8pm or visit our website www.citizensinformation.ie
We are closed on Good Friday 18th April and Easter Monday 21st April.

'Revised National Planning Framework not before time'

'Red tape has prevented house building across Wicklow'

Fine Gael TD Edward Timmins, who has continually raised the issue on finalising the National Planning Framework (NPF) since his election to the Dáil and previously as a Councillor, has welcomed the Publication of the First Revision of the strategy.

In a detailed contribution to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne TD, Deputy Timmins has pinpointed new solutions such as incentivising Councils to build housing and outlined measures to improve housing supply.

Speaking following his Dáil contribution, Deputy Timmins remarked: "The delay in finalising the NPF has prevented much needed house building as the current plan is based on outdated population figures - for example, 'red tape' stopped 335 homes in Blessington where planning permission for the homes was supported by Wicklow County Council, but refused by An Bord Pleanála because the Town Plan was not updated. This update was not possible because the NPF was not updated! This existing framework is based on the outdated 2016 census.



Edward Timmins TD.

"Furthermore, in the County Wicklow Development Plan of 2022 in which I made 48 submissions, we had the bizarre situation where many towns had their residential zonings de-zoned at a time when we all knew there was a huge housing shortage."

Deputy Timmins continued: "The new NPF

needs to allow flexibility, which was used previously in zoning guidelines to take account of zoned lands that are unlikely to be developed for a variety of reasons.

"The limiting of zoned land to exact population targets means in practice there is not enough zoned land thus preventing planning grants for much needed housing (this restrictive and inflexible policy has led to much de-zoning in a time of housing shortage)."

Regarding house building targets in Wicklow, Deputy Timmins commented: "The current targets for Wicklow are clearly too low. For this current year they are 1,411 houses, dropping to 969 in year 2028 and to 528 in years 2029 and 2030. From a national point of view, Councils must be closely involved in the delivery of housing. Delivery must be micro-managed. These targets

must be drilled down further with monthly figures produced by all local authorities of actuals versus targets and explanations given. This is the only way to deliver large numbers of houses. The Minister must then meet the CEOs of the councils and the Heads of Planning on a quarterly basis. This method is exactly the way a business would aim to achieve its target."

Deputy Timmins pointed out: "Currently if someone appeals a planning decision that has been granted, An Bord Pleanála will refuse on the grounds that the Local Area Plan (LAP) is out of date. The Minister could consider giving expired LAPs 'legal status' or extending their lifetime to avoid such refusals until such time as they are updated.

The challenge now is that the Forward Planning units in the County



The Coughlin family at the Thomas Pender Memorial Run in Arklow in aid of the Irish Lung Fibrosis Association.

Councils will have to choose between updating LAPs or updating the County Development plans. My suggestion could avoid that resource issue. In any case, the Forward Planning sections need guidelines from the Minister. I know in Wicklow some LAPs have expired and I am aware of the same issue in other counties including Kildare and Wexford. We need to expedite the review process of the LAPs and the County Development plans. Target figures for each town should not be a cap as it currently operates."

Deputy Timmins added: "On a separate aspect of housing delivery I believe we should be incentivising Councils to build housing. Councils that reach delivery targets could be rewarded with extra funding for infrastructure. This could include parks, sports facilities and other community benefits. This infrastructure should be the norm but we need to see a clear correlation between the housing delivery and infrastructure delivery.

"I would also like to see a detailed target for affordable housing. This

area of housing has been neglected and needs a focus. The monthly delivery figures should show affordable, private and social and cost rental."

Deputy Timmins concluded: "I suggest lifting restrictions on tiered zoned land. This situation with tiered means tier one land must be developed before tier two land is allowed to be developed. Additionally, planning that are due to expire in the next two years should be extended. We are in a really challenging situation so must we must remove all roadblocks to house building.

"The Office of the Planning Regulator must refrain from introducing tiered zoning. They must look at the bigger picture and support house building rather than an excessively strict and narrow interpretation of policy.

"Deadlines should be put on An Bord Pleanála for decisions. County Councils adhere to a strict deadline for planning decisions. But the Bord don't. I know of a planning decision in Wicklow that was due last July and the applicant is still waiting on the Bord which underscores the wider problem."

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Tackling homelessness through collaboration

As the number of homeless people in Ireland climbed to a record high last month, the situation locally remains a critical concern. Bray Homeless Forum (BHF) are a local group of representatives from statutory, community and voluntary sectors working to combat homelessness in the Bray area by putting their heads together on the issues, challenges and possible solutions. With an action-oriented approach, this collaborative group aims to enhance cooperation among agencies, with a longer term vision of shaping local and national policies and strengthening partnerships to reduce and prevent homelessness.

Active members of BHF include representatives of Ark Housing, BARS, BCAT, Bray & North Wicklow Area Partnership, Bray Women's Refuge, Citizens Info, Dublin Simon Community, the Housing Department, MABS, Tiglin, WH Five Loaves, the Wicklow County Council Homeless Outreach Team, and Bray Municipal District Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

Individuals or families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are never discussed at the forum. A sub group, the Homeless Action Team (HAT), manages individu-

al referrals, of which last year they received 70. Actions then taken by the group resulted in 40% positive outcomes including permanent housing allocations, housing applications being completed to support later transitions to housing, and where a more permanent solution could not be found, placements in emergency accommodation.

Conscious of the power of data to effect change, Bray Homeless Forum conducts an annual Rough Sleepers Count to provide an accurate snapshot of homelessness in Bray, informing future policy and service provi-

sion. The 2025 count is scheduled for early April. Over the years it has helped identify trends, ensure efficient resource allocation, and support advocacy efforts for improved housing solutions. Additionally, it allows BHF to measure the impact of existing interventions and strengthen collaboration among member organisations.

BHF also played a crucial role in coordinating emergency responses for homeless people during severe weather events, including recent storms Éowyn and Darragh.

Jennifer Jones of Bray & North Wicklow Area

Partnership (BNWAP) said:

"Communication between stakeholders is key to addressing this crisis and ensuring those in need receive the right support at the right time."

Wicklow County Council (WCC) housing officer Brian Wildes commented:

"Collaboration between agencies has significantly improved accommodation outcomes for our clients and service users. When someone experiencing homelessness is referred, we know exactly which organisations to contact to ensure they have access to food,



showers and clothing. We can also help people apply for social housing, set up a Post Office address, and access other essential services."

To further raise awareness and foster collaboration, BHF is planning a Positive Engagement

Seminar for autumn 2025, coinciding with Homelessness Awareness Day on October 10th. The event aims to increase visibility of homelessness issues, highlight available support services such as mental health and employment resources, and

challenge common misconceptions. Open to the general public and local stakeholders, the seminar will feature expert speakers and discussions on practical solutions. Funding avenues and sponsorships are being explored to support

venue, speaker, and promotional costs.

BHF meetings take place monthly at Bray Municipal District. For further information or to contact Bray Homeless Forum, please email info@bnwap.ie or call (01) 2868266.



Hannah Tyrell, Leinster Ambassador for Pieta's Darkness Into Light.

Sign up, Show up, Save Lives

Pieta and Electric Ireland launch the 16th annual Darkness Into Light Walk in Leinster

Darkness Into Light, Pieta's biggest fundraising event proudly supported by Electric Ireland, returns at dawn on Saturday, 10th May 2025, aiming to surpass last year's incredible total of €4.5 million. This crucial walk funds lifesaving suicide prevention and self-harm services with more than 100,000 participants across 12 countries expected to take part, uniting communities in the most important sunrise of the year. The walk begins in darkness and transitions into light, symbolising the journey from despair to hope.

Taking part is as simple as signing up, lacing up your walking shoes, and showing up ó whether on your own, with a friend, or even your dog. Every registration directly funds Pieta's crisis support, therapy sessions, and suicide prevention initiatives, making a real difference to those who need it most. Signing up is simple - head to darknessintolight.ie where you can select your county and local walk, buy your ticket, set yourself a fundraising target, and get ready to show up and save lives!?

If you sign up before Wednesday, 30th April, you'll be able to purchase one of the brand new official 2025 Darkness Into Light T-shirts and receive it ahead

of the walk.

Pieta Chief Executive, Stephanie Manahan, says: "The funds we raise each year through Darkness Into Light are essential in sustaining Pieta's free, professional, and accessible support services. Every lifesaving conversation, every lifesaving counselling session, and every moment of suicide and self-harm prevention we provide is made possible by the generosity of those who sign up, show up, and walk. We are deeply grateful for the incredible commitment of our supporters and our sponsor, Electric Ireland, whose efforts help us provide hope and vital support to those who need it most."

Launched by Hannah Tyrell, Leinster Ambassador, this year's walk encourages the public to sign up and support Pieta's biggest fundraiser. In 2024 alone, Pieta delivered 12,890 hours of therapy and assisted 1,777 people in Leinster, highlighting the ongoing need for public support.

Darkness Into Light remains a vital source of funding, with over 87% of Pieta's annual income generated through public donations. These funds directly support the charity's team of over 250 professional therapists, Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officers, and support staff across Leinster and beyond.

Sign up today at darknessintolight.ie

Join Marilyn's Mater Paddle for Women's Cancer Care

Bigger, bolder, BLONDER! Marilyn's Mater Paddle is making a dazzling comeback this summer and hitting the beach at Donabate, Co. Dublin! The Mater Hospital Foundation is inviting gals and guys from across the Garden County to join in the fun on Sunday, 25th May for the second-annual event that promises to kick off the summer season in style.

Take to the red carpet at our new location of the Shoreline Hotel before sashaying over to Balcarrick Beach for a sea dip with simply oceans of style, darling.

Marilyn's Mater Paddle brings together a galaxy of starlets dressed as Hollywood's most iconic actress, with proceeds from ticket sales and fundraising going to support women's cancer care in the Mater

Public Hospital.

The event is open to adults of all ages with each gal or guy who signs up receiving their very own Paddle Pack, starring a blonde bombshell wig, retro red heart-shaped glasses and a beach-ball. All you need to do is wear your brightest red lipstick and a 1950s swimsuit or swing dress to perfect the look.

After the Marilyn's emerge from their sea dip, they will make their way back to the Shoreline Hotel for a chic 'Marilyn Mixer' party, with refreshments and swinging tunes.

The funds raised from Marilyn's Mater Paddle will go to support women's cancer care in the Mater Public Hospital.

To register, simply visit www.materfoundation.ie/marilyn





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Wicklow Sinn Féin Easter Commemoration to take place in Bray on Easter Monday

21st April at 12 noon. Assemble at Bray Town Hall. Main Speaker: Bray Cathaoirleach Councillor Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has announced details of the party's annual Easter 1916 Commemoration, which will take place in Bray on Easter Monday, 21st April, at 12 noon. The commemoration will assemble at the Town Hall on Bray Main Street, and members of the public are warmly invited to attend.

Deputy Brady said: "Each year, across the country, Sinn Féin proudly hosts commemorations to honour the memory of those who gave their lives in the cause of Irish freedom. The Easter Rising of 1916 was a pivotal moment in Irish history - a moment of immense courage, sacrifice, and vision.

"It is our duty not only to remember the men and women who participated in that brave stand for independence but to ensure that their ideals and aspirations continue to guide us today. Their vision was of a new Republic - sovereign, independent, and grounded in the principles of equality, social justice, and national unity.

"The Wicklow commemoration is an opportunity for our community to come together, to reflect

on the legacy of 1916, and to reaffirm our commitment to achieving the Republic envisaged in the Proclamation of 1916 that truly cherishes all the children of the nation equally, as promised in that timeless document.

"This is not just about honouring history. It is about recognising that the work of 1916 remains unfinished. The struggle for a united Ireland is ongoing, and the values that inspired the leaders of the Rising - equality, sovereignty, and national self-determination - are as relevant now as they were over a century ago.

"I would encourage everyone in Bray and across Wicklow to attend this important event. Whether you are a lifelong republican or someone who believes in fairness, equality, and unity, this



John Brady TD and Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien.

commemoration is for you. It is a respectful, inclusive, and dignified event open to all, regardless of background or political belief.

"I would also encourage people to wear the Easter lily with pride - as a mark of respect for the men and women of 1916, and as a symbol of ongoing commitment to the ideals they fought and died for."

The main speaker at this year's commemoration

will be Bray Municipal District Cathaoirleach, Councillor Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien, who will deliver the keynote oration.

Deputy Brady concluded: "This Easter, let us remember not only those who came before us, but also recommit ourselves to building a better, fairer Ireland for those who come after us. Let us continue the journey toward Irish unity and justice for all."

'Wicklow shoplifters giving two fingers to the State'

Ní Mhurchú calls for zero-tolerance approach

Ireland South MEP Cynthia Ní Mhurchú has obtained new regional crime figures from the CSO which show that shoplifting has dramatically increased across most counties in Ireland over the past 20 years. The Ireland South MEP has called for tough action against the minority of people who feel it is acceptable to steal from hard working small family retail businesses.

There were 278 recorded incidents of shoplifting in the Wicklow Garda Division in 2003. This rose to 787 recorded incidents of shoplifting in Wicklow in 2024, an increase of 183%. There was an 11.9% increase in shoplifting offences in Wicklow between 2023 and 2024.

Amongst the measures Ní Mhurchú is calling for to immediately address shoplifting is for Government to introduce the Retail Crime Strategy which was promised in the Programme for Government.

The Ireland South MEP has also called for other measures included in the Programme for Government to be introduced immediately.

Ní Mhurchú is calling for:

1) Mandatory prison sentences for anyone caught shoplifting on more than one occasion.

2) Update the Public Order Acts to allow a prolific offender of retail crime to be excluded from a premises for a certain period of time.

3) Support targeted garda operations to tackle retail crime and remove assets from those suspected of organised retail theft.

4) Introduce a specific offence of assaulting a retail worker.

5) End the practice of 'retail defamation' where someone can sue a retailer for defamation if they are stopped with the bona fide belief that they have stolen something from the shop.

According to one Carlow-based retailer that Ní Mhurchú spoke to, small retailers are fed up with what they see as a revolving door justice system for shoplifters. That retailer outlined his issues with retail theft: "Filing a report with Gardai is hardly worth it. Gardai are also fed up seeing the same people getting off the hook and their time is being wasted with the same offenders again and again. In the last year I have been in court twice. My son tried to stop a guy robbing cigarettes and he got a straight box to the jaw, which could have broken it. That offender only got 3 months added

to his current sentence. I caught a guy robbing €90 worth of chocolate from me. He was already on a suspended sentence, which was activated but he appealed it to the Circuit court and walked free. He was back at my shop the following week, after been warned by the court to stay away."

The CSO shoplifting figures indicate a dramatic trend upwards in shoplifting offences across most counties in Ireland. Some of the biggest jumps between the year 2003 and 2024 occurred in counties like Tipperary, Wexford, Wicklow, Kildare and Limerick.

Ní Mhurchú welcomed the fact that, while the 20+ year trend for shoplifting has gone up, counties like Mayo, Donegal, Waterford, Kerry, Clare, and Galway all recorded percentage decreases for the number of recorded shoplifting offences between 2023 and 2024. Ní Mhurchú attributed this to more focused Garda actions of late and she praised Gardai for beginning to make progress against shoplifters.



Michelle Glynn and Lauren Griffin at the Thomas Pender Memorial Run in Arklow in aid of the Irish Lung Fibrosis Association.

Cynthia Ní Mhurchú

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Dr. John McManus retires

It was 1974 and recently-qualified, recently-married Dr John McManus was looking for somewhere to live and establish a general practice.

As a native of Blackrock, Co Dublin, it had to be near the sea, but he and his then wife Liz, the former TD and junior minister, also wanted it to be near the mountains.

Bray seemed to tick the right boxes, and then fate took a hand.

“As we came into the

town,” Dr McManus recalls, “we met a friend in the main street, who said you couldn't get a doctor in Bray for love or money.”

He was speaking fifty-one years later as he says goodbye to general practice, but it is no longer the two-man Carlton Clinic

which he established along with Dr Tony O'Brien. Instead, it occupies the Bray Health Centre, with its 44-strong team of doctors, nurses and administrative staff and the latest medical technology.

Last week, colleagues stressed how much this development owed to Dr

McManus and paid tribute to his skills and character at a farewell reception.

Thanks to the introduction of computers in 1993, we know that since that time, Dr McManus saw 85,454 patients (more than the capacity of Croke Park) and prescribed 8,427 different drugs.

“We have been lucky to count Dr John as a daily presence in our working lives, said clinic administrator Trish Duffy. “They say a good doctor treats the disease, and a great doctor treats the patient.”

Dr McManus is retiring, but it is the future he has been thinking about. “One of the downsides of the technology is, when you're looking at the computer you're not looking at the patient,” he said in a farewell interview. “You're not picking up all those very important signals that people give in a consultation.”

He has been doing some private research on the nature of doctor/patient consultations and what leads to successful outcomes or missed diagnosis. He plans to go deeper into the subject now that he free of the growing pressures of general practice. He thinks AI could help doctors concentrate more on the human interactions, as they had to do in that pre-computer age.

It may have been partly accidental that he went into general practice and came to Bray, but after five decades, he is sure he made wise choices. “They all want to be heart surgeons or whatever now, but general practice is probably the most rewarding job in medicine, emotionally, intellectually, that anyone can have. It's a very, very good way to spend one's life.”



Dr. John McManus sitting in his surgery chair for the last time.



Dr John McManus cutting the cake with Sylvia McManus.



Baby Luke, Dr Sarah Mitchell, Christina Healy and Jackie McDonagh, Domestic Team, and Mo Clarke, Admin.



Dr. John McManus with the staff at the Carlton Clinic.

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Over 200 students attend inaugural Youth Biodiversity Conference

Over 200 secondary school students attended Wicklow's inaugural Youth Biodiversity Conference, held at Blessington Community College on Wednesday, 2nd April. The event was organised by a student Environment Council committee of eighteen students ranging from first to fifth years with support from their teachers and Wicklow County Council. Students from four different secondary schools in Carnew, Baltinglass and Dunlavin participated in the conference.

The event was officially opened by Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr. Paul O'Brien, who commended Blessington's community college principal, Kieran Burke, assistant principal, Tanya Twyford-Troy and the students environment council for agreeing to host the event. He expressed his admiration, saying, "It is truly inspiring to see the local secondary schools coming together for this biodiversity conference. Events like this play a crucial role in tackling the challenges of both climate change and biodiversity loss. We are living in a time of great challenges, but also great opportunities.

Together, let's be the generation that restores, protects, and cherishes the natural world. Let's be the voices that deliver a healthier, more biodiverse planet. And let's never forget that even the smallest actions, when multiplied, can change the world."

School Principal,

Kieran Burke said that "Blessington Community College is honoured and excited to host the county's first Youth Biodiversity Conference. This event represents a powerful opportunity for young minds to come together, share ideas, and take meaningful steps toward protecting our planet's incredible natural diversity. Our school is deeply committed to environmental education and sustainability, and we believe that empowering students to lead conversations about biodiversity is essential to creating lasting change. Hosting this conference not only reflects our values but also provides a platform for young leaders to connect, collaborate, and inspire action in their communities and beyond."

The conference, co-hosted by Ruth Scott and students Mia Warren and Tara Cullen, featured presentations on climate change, biodiversity Loss, Wicklow's mountains and

National Park, life on land and water, fast fashion, and biodiversity actions we can take.

Eanna Ni Lamhna an Irish biologist, television presenter and author spoke about the importance of caring for biodiversity.

Anja Murray, an ecologist, broadcaster and author shared insights on life on land and water and approaches to talking actions for Ireland's environment.

Dr. Jim Carolan, Senior Lecturer Maynooth University, addressed Ireland's biodiversity crisis and shared experiences from Maynooth's University.

Declan Murphy, bird-watcher and author highlighted biodiversity loss within Wicklow.

The conference also included feedback from the student Environment Council discussing biodiversity-related workshops leading up to the conference.

A key goal of the Youth Biodiversity Conference was to amplify the voices



Guest speakers, local representatives and the Blessington Climate Action team at the Wicklow Youth Biodiversity Conference in Blessington Community College.

of young people in Wicklow, empowering them to speak out about the climate and biodiversity emergency. The student environment council carefully chose the main topics with the intention of inspiring attendees to become lifelong advocates for a sustainable future.

Education plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges of climate change. Topics related to biodiversity loss are now part of the learning curricu-

lum at various stages in Ireland's educational program, including the Leaving Certificate. Biodiversity literacy has become an essential element of biodiversity action, shifting from a peripheral issue to a central focus that influences people's beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences, and behaviours toward the climate and biodiversity emergency.

The conference aimed to raise awareness among

younger generations about the impact on the biodiversity emergency, while also promoting actionable solutions to adapt to and mitigate its effects. It also serves as an annual platform for the youth to engage with policy makers at both the local and national levels on the urgent need for climate and biodiversity action. When the 200 students were polled about how concerned they are about climate change and biodi-

versity loss, 34% of students were alarmed, 23% were anxious, and a further 24% felt unsettled.

Considering this high level of concern 49% still said that they would not give up social media to combat the climate and biodiversity emergency. The students believed that their biggest change they would like us to make, would be to stop the ongoing pollution of our waters and wildlife areas, followed by

wildlife restoration. Over 60% of the students are also either optimistic or hopeful that we can still reverse the worst impacts of the climate and biodiversity emergency.

Co-hosts Mia and Tara wrapped up the conference by emphasizing that while students are not responsible for causing the climate and biodiversity emergency, they can play a vital role in helping to take action and to find solutions.



The Blessington Community College Climate Action team with MC Ruth Scott, Pamela McCann - Codling Wind Park, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr. Paul O'Brien, Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District Cllr. Patsy Glennon and Climate Change Coordinator with Wicklow County Council - Mark Costello at the Wicklow Youth Biodiversity Conference in Blessington Community College.



Rosie Callaghan, AdvDip Hyp, HDip Ed

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Roundwood runners up in national Credit Union Schools Quiz

Ireland's brightest young minds were crowned national champions at the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) Schools Quiz Grand Final, held in the RDS Dublin on Sunday, 6th April. Following months of intensive competition involving more than 25,000 students from across the island, the final saw 88 talented teams go head-to-head in a dramatic conclusion to the popular quiz.

Roundwood National School, representing Altura Credit Union, were among the Joint Runners Up in Competition B. Roundwood was represented by Mark Ichim, Caoimhe Connolly, Charlie Connolly and Bandon McCann.

The atmosphere at the packed RDS venue was electric as competitors tackled challenging questions spanning subjects such as history, geography, science, popular culture, and general knowledge. Presenter and RTÉ personality, John Sharpson, affectionately known as 'Múinteoir John'

from RTÉ's Home School Hub, hosted the nail-biting event.

The Credit Union Schools Quiz, a cornerstone of the ILCU's youth outreach, fosters the principles of teamwork, critical thinking, and knowledge-building among Ireland's school children. The competition remains a highlight in the primary school calendar, underpinning the Credit Union movement's commitment to nurturing community involvement and financial literacy from a young age.

Speaking at the event, ILCU President Martin Busch praised

participants for their remarkable talent and dedication: "This year's competition showcased an extraordinary level of intelligence, determination, and team spirit among the competitors. Watching these young minds in action fills us with pride and optimism for the future. Congratulations to our new national champions and to all participants who made it to the final. Special thanks to the dedicated teachers, families, and Credit Union volunteers who continue to make this event possible."



Pupils from Roundwood National School Mark Ichim, Caoimhe Connolly, Charlie Connolly and Bandon McCann, pictured with their teachers Margaret Fitzpatrick, Brian Flood and Muireann Farrell and ILCU President Martin Busch and Quiz Master John Sharpson as they were announced Joint-Runners Up winners in the B Category in this year's Credit Union Schools Quiz.

Whitmore calls for Government action on Leaving Cert grade inflation

Speaking in the Dail last Wednesday, Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore, highlighted the systemic unfairness faced by the 2025 Leaving Cert students and called on the government to address this issue urgently.

"61,000 students will sit the Leaving Cert in Ireland in two months' stressful period as they sit the Leaving Cert in time. This is always a stressful period as they compete with one another

for third-level places, but it is particularly stressful for the 2025 cohort. Not only are they competing with one another, but they are also competing with 20,000 students from previous years who had higher grade inflation," Deputy Whitmore explained to Taoiseach Micheal Martin.

There are 61,000 students sitting the Leaving Cert this year, and there are 83,000 people regis-

tered with the CAO. Roughly 10,000 of these registered applicants are from the class of 2024, and 5,000 are from the classes of 2023 and 2022. The class of 2024 benefited from an average of 7.5% grade inflation. This year, the grade inflation will be lowered to around 5.5%. In terms of points, this amounts to a difference of 15/16 points.

"15/16 points might not sound like a lot, but that could very well be the difference for a student between getting a course or not," Deputy

Whitmore continued. "And this could be the case for many of the 2,000 students sitting the Leaving Cert in my constituency of Wicklow.

"I have received distressed emails from my constituents, both students and parents, panicking about this inflationary change and what it could mean for their future. The last thing Leaving Cert students need is more stress," Deputy Whitmore added.

"I recognise that we do need to return to pre-pandemic levels, but this is not the way to do it.

There needs to be a truly gradual reduction, not the kind that we are seeing now. We cannot have students competing with applicants who benefitted from higher inflation rates; it is simply not equitable," Deputy Whitmore explained.

"A number of solutions have been suggested, the most logical being a weighted system for students applying from non-2025 years. At the end of the day, students sitting the Leaving Cert in 2025 will have lower points than those who sat it pre-2025, and there must be provisions made for those students," Deputy Whitmore urged.

Taoiseach Micheal Martin informed Deputy Whitmore that he would raise this issue with the



Jennifer Whitmore TD.

Minister for Education and Youth and assured her that fairness is a priority for them. Since that conversation, Deputy Whitmore has written to both the Taoiseach and Minister to underscore the urgency and salience of this issue.

Supporting the Community

Cllr. Stephen Stokes

Independent Councillor & Peace Commissioner Serving Charlesland, Delgany, Greystones, Kilcoole, Killadreenan & Newcastle

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Second Saturday of Each Month

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Newcastle

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Newcastle Community Centre

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Pupils from Greystones Community National picking up the Most Colourful Group Award at the awards ceremony for the Greystones St. Patrick's Day parade, from Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Tom Fortune and Cllr Orla Finn.

'It's time to re-open the Cliff Walk'

"There are some places so beloved, so embedded in our sense of place and belonging, that their absence is felt not just as a physical gap but as a cultural and emotional one. The Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk is one of those places," declared Fianna Fáil MEP Cynthia N' Mhurchú last week.

"For generations of Wicklow people, and visitors from across Ireland and beyond, this path has offered more than just a walking route. It has given us moments of calm, of connection, of joy. And for far too long now, it has been closed.

"The current closure, now approaching its fourth year, is deeply disappointing, and quite frankly, unjustifiable. What began as a precautionary measure due to landslides and erosion has turned into an extended period of inaction. Nature may have caused the initial damage, but bureaucracy and political inaction have kept the gates locked.

"Let's be clear: everyone recognises the importance of public safety. No one is calling for a shortcut around expert reports or environmental assessments. But there is a glaring lack of urgency around this project, and we owe it to the public to ask why.

"The Bray-Greystones Cliff Walk is more than a walking trail, it is a symbol of the community, the resilience, and the respect for the natural beauty that defines County Wicklow. It connects two thriving towns, supports local businesses, underpins our tourism offering, and gives families, older people, and visitors an accessible way to enjoy our coastline. It is, quite simply, one of Ireland's most iconic walks and it deserves more than an occasional mention in a press release.

"It is disappointing that, despite being a Wicklow TD and now our Tánaiste, Simon Harris has not

championed this issue with the urgency or visibility it demands. Local representatives, including councillors and community leaders, have done their best to keep this issue alive, but without serious national commitment and the funding and coordination that go with it we are left in limbo.

"There's been a lot of talk over the years: working groups, feasibility studies, inter-agency consultations. And yet, the barriers remain. There is little clarity for the public. There is no detailed timeline. And crucially, there has been no clear commitment to delivering a long-term, resilient, and safe reopening.

"Meanwhile, other parts of the country are moving forward with ambitious outdoor infrastructure. In Mayo and Waterford, in Donegal and Kerry, we've seen significant investment in greenways and coastal routes. Wicklow, Ireland's Garden County, should be leading in this space, not falling behind.

"As an MEP, I know the transformative potential of EU funding for regional development and environmental protection. I also know that many of these projects begin with political will. If we are serious about developing sustainable tourism, boosting rural economies, and encouraging active lifestyles, then we must also be serious about restoring and protecting our walking infrastructure.

"This is not just about restoring a path. It's about restoring pride and possibility. It's about showing the people of Wicklow that their voices are heard, that when they speak up about something they care about,

something that brings joy and health and connection, their concerns are met with more than silence.

"We also need a new approach to coastal resilience in Wicklow, this also includes the Murrough in Wicklow Town which has seen an area of natural beauty being destroyed. I welcome the Iarnród Éireann funding in place for coastal erosion defence measures. Climate change is not going away, and this won't be the last time we face coastal erosion or landslides. The Bray-Greystones walk should be a flagship example of how we can protect and adapt our natural amenities for future generations. That means proper geotechnical planning, sustainable construction, and ongoing maintenance not patchwork repairs or indefinite closures.

"I'm calling today for a cross-agency, cross-party task force to fast-track the reopening of the Cliff Walk. Local stakeholders must be at the heart of this from environmental groups and engineers to tourism operators and residents.

"And I call on the Tánaiste, as both a Wicklow TD and a national leader, to take this issue seriously and personally. It is not enough to rely on occasional updates. We need leadership, funding, and follow-through.

"Wicklow is a proud, vibrant county with some of the most stunning natural assets in the country. We deserve better than locked gates and empty promises. Let's reopen the Cliff Walk, not next year, not the year after but with a plan that begins now."

Whitmore commends 'It Takes a Village' in Dáil

Speaking at Leaders' Questions in the Dáil last week, Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore, commended the It Takes a Village Initiative in Greystones for its leadership and guidance in protecting children from the dangers of the online world. She highlighted the overwhelming challenges parents face and called on the government to urgently address these issues.

"Parents and schools in my constituency, particularly the It Takes a Village Initiative in Greystones, have been doing amazing work in this area. As part of the initiative, all eight local primary schools introduced a voluntary no smartphone code. Under the scheme, parents agreed not to give their children smartphones until they enter secondary school. I know other schools around the country have implemented similar schemes, and mobile phone bans in both primary and secondary schools are now increasingly common," Deputy Whitmore explained.

"There is also huge uptake in the Safer Internet Day every year in Wicklow, which helps teach students about online safety and encourages them to adopt safe online practices, and I'd like to extend my huge thanks and appreciation to the teachers who organise and facilitate these days for the students in my constituency. The Gen Free: Free to be Kids campaign launched in

Greystones recently, and they highlighted the urgent need to transfer laws that we have to protect children in the 'physical' world into the 'digital' world. This campaign has been doing phenomenal work in this area," Deputy Whitmore noted.

"However, that it cannot be the sole responsibility of parents and schools to protect children from toxic online content. The government has a role to play and a responsibility to address this issue.

"We think our children are safe when they are at home with us. But, the reality is, we often have no idea of what they are looking at online.

"Parents trying to protect their kids from the online world increasingly feel overwhelmed and anxious. Because children now carry around one of the biggest threats they face: their phones. However, the persistent problem of toxic content being fed to children outside the school gates remains. One study found that it took just two minutes from setting up an account for teenage boys to be fed

harmful content. Within two hours and 32 minutes, nearly 80% of the content being recommended was harmful. This dangerous content is endless and relentless, and it is being deliberately funnelled into children's accounts on a doom loop.

"A new report from the Children's Rights Alliance has warned about a lack of regulation online, particularly the lack of regulation of recommender algorithms. These algorithms are specifically designed to keep children in dangerous online bubbles, where there is no escape from endlessly scrolling harmful and toxic content."

Although there are many initiatives such as the one in my own constituency doing amazing work across the country, it is high time the Government stood in and fulfilled their duty to the children of Ireland by introducing stronger obligations on social media platforms and starting a meaningful conversation about online safety for children," Deputy Whitmore concluded.



Tom O'Mahony from Greystones Town Team and Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr Tom Fortune presenting the Most Topical Entry award to The Friends of the Cliff Walk, at the Greystones St. Patrick's Day parade awards ceremony.

2025 Greystones Municipal District / Wicklow Times

People of the Year Awards



The Awards will be presented in the Greystones Golf Club, Greystones on Thursday 15th May, 2025 at 8pm
Closing date for nominations is Friday 25th April

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

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- Sports person of the Year
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- Civic Award
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- Special Person of the Year
- Young Entrepreneur of the Year



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New walking trail opened at Bray Emmets

On Saturday 5th April, Tanaiste Simon Harris officially opened the newly developed walking trail at the Bray Emmets GAA Club. The Tom Walsh Walkway seeks to facilitate people who have left their competitive playing days behind but would still like to pursue a healthier lifestyle by walking in a safe environment.



Tanaiste Simon Harris with young players at Bray Emmets GAA Club.

The Tanaiste was accompanied by Cllr Melanie Corrigan and by local club members, including young players, and spent the morning at the heart of the community, walking the trail and meeting with enthusiastic participants of all ages.

Speaking on Saturday,

Simon Harris highlighted the importance of sports clubs like Bray Emmets, which serve as pillars of local communities: "It is truly a privilege to be here today in Bray Emmets GAA Club, which has played a pivotal role in our community for over a century.

"The new walking trail not only encourages physical activity but also reinforces the inclusive spirit of this club, which has been welcoming to people of all ages and backgrounds. The walking trail is part of the club's ongoing effort to foster physical and mental well-being in the community.

"I want to particularly commend the club for its commitment to inclu-

sivity, referring to the many programs it runs, such as the Dads and Lads and Mothers and Others football teams, as well as its All-Stars initiative for those with neurodiversity or other challenges who I had the privilege of spending time with.

"Bray Emmets GAA club is a powerhouse in the North Wicklow area as it facilitates boys and girls and young adults to follow their dreams of playing competitive fare. The club is the fastest growing sporting organisation in the county and now has 1,300 members with a proud boast that 52 percent of that number is female. The club loves its hurling and football but it has an all embrac-

ing philosophy which aims to include everyone in society.

"This has seen the establishment of Bray Emmets All Stars which caters for children with additional needs but gives them the platform to play games in a manner and at a level which allows them to look forward to every session at the club.

Bray Emmets Chairman Gary Prunty said it was a momentous day for the club to see the opening of this new community facility around the club's four pitches at Old Conna.

"This is what we want our club to be about - an all-inclusive place which welcomes every age and every ability," he stressed.

Federation of Irish Sport honours Wicklow volunteer

The Federation of Irish Sport recently announced that Brian Whelan has been named County Wicklow's recipient of the 2024 Volunteers in Sport Award. Brian was honoured at a special awards ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Blanchardstown alongside a volunteer from every county in Ireland (four from Dublin) for their dedication and passion for their local clubs.

Brian's commitment to angling in Ireland through his work with the Irish Federation of Sea Anglers (IFSA) has been exemplary. As the current treasurer, Brian has contributed to all aspects of the IFSA for over 10 years, serving roles from boat angling manager to mentor, with a special focus on engaging younger generations and people with disabilities. He has led the organisation of World Shore and Boat Angling Championships, earning global recognition for Ireland as a premier angling destination. Brian also organises local and national events, and despite a busy personal and professional life, he continues to strengthen community ties through his work with the IFSA.

Throughout November and December 2024, the Federation of Irish Sport called on the public, sports clubs, Local Sports Partnerships, and Governing Bodies to nominate volunteers who have made a meaningful difference. This year's awards received a record number of nominations from over 53 sporting disciplines, reflecting the incredible diversity of volunteering in Ireland.

Every week, 460,000 volunteers dedicate their time to support 1.47 million club members across the country, making a significant social and economic contribution valued at €1.5 billion annually. These volunteers are the backbone of Irish sport, helping to keep communities active, healthy, and connected.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr.

Paul O'Brien, congratulated Brian on being recognised on a national scale and thanked him "for the tireless hours volunteering to make the sport of Sea Angling accessible to others in the community".

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, highlighted the importance of recognising volunteers in sports clubs and thanked Brian for his dedication to the community.

Speaking about the importance of the awards, Mary O'Connor, CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport, stated "The Federation of Irish Sport is proud to celebrate our volunteers in sport and to pay tribute to these incredible individuals who give their time and energy to enrich Irish sport and strengthen communities. These awards are a vital nationwide recognition of the scale of volunteering that is required every week to support 1.47 million club members around the country."

Sport Ireland CEO Dr. Una May added: "Volunteers are the lifeblood of Irish sport, driving participation across all disciplines. Sport Ireland research reveals unprecedented levels of engagement, with nearly two million adults participating in sport weekly. That's a real testament to the tireless efforts of volunteers. They don't merely contribute - they transform aspirations into achievements, making sport accessible and enjoyable for all. We all owe them a debt of gratitude and we're happy to play our part in recognising their dedication."

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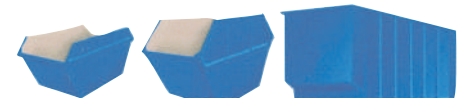
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Vice Captain Paul Farrar, Captains Sean O'Rourke & Siobhan Mooney and Vice Captain Bairbre Smith arriving at Delgany Golf Club for the 2025 Captains Drive In.

GAA clubs in Wicklow invited to compete for €5,000 prize

GAA & Camogie clubs in Wicklow are being invited to take part in the third annual éir for allí Poc Tapa Challenge. This competition gives clubs the chance to win up to €5,000 and the unique opportunity to showcase their skills at Croke Park during All-Ireland Semi-Final Day.



Hurler and éir ambassador Conor Whelan of Galway.

The 2025 Poc Tapa Challenge was officially launched by some of hurling's most celebrated names: Declan Hannon (Limerick), Shane Kingston (Cork), John Conlon (Clare), and Conor Whelan (Galway). Inspired by the traditional "Poc Fada" competition, the challenge has been reimagined to reflect the

fast-paced nature of the modern game ñ rewarding teamwork, precision and speed.

Teams of up to six players take their positions at designated cones around the four corners of the pitch and pass the sliotar in the quickest time to complete the circuit.

The Poc Tapa Challenge is open to all

GAA & Camogie clubs nationwide, welcoming participants of all skill levels and ages, whether you're a seasoned senior team or a rising squad just getting started, the éir for allí Poc Tapa Challenge offers an exciting opportunity to showcase your talent, teamwork and community spirit.

To enter, teams must

film their fastest time completing the challenge on a smartphone, ensuring a stopwatch is visible throughout the footage. Videos must be filmed from the centre of the pitch and submit via X (formerly Twitter) @eir or Instagram @eir.ireland using the hashtags #eirforall and #PocTapa before Wednesday 25th June.

Last year's final saw local Wexford rivals go head-to-head, with Craanford GAA Club emerging victorious with an impressive time of 35 seconds, closely followed by Tara Rocks GAA Club finished as runners-up with a time of 50 seconds. The competition continues to grow in popularity, bringing clubs together in a shared celebration of skill and speed.

Speaking about the upcoming GAA All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship, sponsored by éir, GAA President, Jarlath Burns, said: "At its heart, the GAA is about community and connection - values that are brought to life through initiatives like the 'eir for all' Poc Tapa Challenge. It's a celebration not just of skill and speed, but of the community spirit that brings all our clubs together. I'd like to take this opportunity to commend éir for their continued commitment to Gaelic games, both through their championship sponsorship and their investment in grassroots development. Opportunities like these to represent your club on the pitch at Croke Park create lifelong memories and strengthen the ties that make our Association so special."



Donncha O'Neill with Leinster and Irish international rugby star Jordan Larmour during his recent visit to Arklow Rugby Club.



10 boys from West Wicklow represented Wicklow schools in a halftime game during the Wicklow v. Longford Leinster Championship game at a sun drenched Glennon's Brothers Pearse Park on Sunday 6th April. The boys put on a terrific display of football against their Longford counterparts, shading the result and getting the Wicklow crowd in good voice. The players on the day were: Evan Miley, Scoil Niocláis Naofa, Dunlavin; Kevin Woulfe, Scoil Naomh Iosaf, Baltinglass; Rónan Metcalfe, Donard NS; Oscar Roddy, Scoil Naomh Caoimhin, Hollywood; Matthew O Sullivan, Scoil Treasa Naofa, Tynock; Bobby Murphy, Scoil Naomh Brid, Knockananna; Noah Flynn, St. Mary's SNS Blessington; Keelin O' Neill, St. Brigid's NS Manor Kilbride; Daniel Flynn, St. Mary's SNS Blessington; TJ Harney, Scoil Niocláis Naofa, Dunlavin.

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Greystones students stage Grease the Musical



The 4th year students of Greystones Community College took to the stage recently in front of 3 sell out audiences to stage the schools first school Musical - Grease.

A 40-member strong cast told the story of the Pink Ladies and the Burger Palace Boys who, along with their peers, navigate the complexities of teenage life together. They showed that 'Grease is the word' by performing upbeat songs synonymous with the musical such as 'We go together' and 'Born to handjive'. The show which was led by musical director Ms. Kathy Ann Murphy and vocal director Ms. Aoife Jones received rave reviews from those lucky to secure tickets.

In the lead roles, Emily Carrick stepped onto the stage as Sandy, the sweet innocent and naive new girl in town who forms a relationship with the confident leader of the Burger Palace Boys Danny, played by Aaron Joseph.

Seren Stamper Walsh played the effervescent Rizzo, Eve Dunne brought charm to the role of Frenchy with Charlotte Burns a natural Marty. Katie Farrell jumped into the character of Patty and Abigail Townsend brought energy to the role of Jan. For the Burger Palace Boys,

Matthew Ryan, Alex Cole and Isaac Carcone brought spark and flair to the stage along with Jack Barlow as Kenickie who brought the offbeat sense of humour to perform 'Grease Lightnin'. There is no doubt that the Greystones Community College students brought the talent and momentum to Rydell High.

Commenting on the concluding night of the Musical, Director Ms. Kathy Ann Murphy said "The cast were an amazing group of talented stars to work with, dedicating hours to rehearsals and going above and beyond to put themselves outside their comfort zone to stage such a spectacular show".

The musical was a culmination of 6 months of commitment and dedication from the students as their hard work brought a truly professional show to life. With incredible dance solos performed by Anna Dillane and Lucy Tyndall and a strong team in the dance ensemble, the choreography was powerful throughout. The vocal performances were jaw

dropping from all the lead cast with Nina Dobrzanska performing an effortless Beauty School Drop Out as Teen Angel.

It wasn't all about the students as two staff members also stepped outside their comfort zone to join the students on stage. Principal Ruairi Farrell to the stage in role of Vince Fontaine with Deputy Principal Maria Lynch playing the role of Greta McGee. Principal Ruairi Farrell said "We were proud to stand on stage alongside Greystones Community College's amazing students at such a spectacular performance. Whether students were directly on stage performing, changing sets in a frenzy, or working backstage behind the scenes on costumes, microphones, set design, make-up or programmes, our students left no stone unturned in bringing Grease to the stage.

GCC would like to acknowledge the support of all the sponsors for the show especially BM Plumbing Solutions, School Wear House, the ART LAB and Exam Focus Ireland.

Square One Theatre's 'Present Laughter' at Mermaid

Tuesday 15th to Saturday 19th April at Mermaid Arts Centre from 7:30pm each evening

Square One presents 'Present Laughter' by Noël Coward. Present Laughter is a comedic play by Noël Coward that offers a witty and satirical look at fame, relationships, and self-obsession. The story revolves around Garry Essendine, a charismatic and self-absorbed middle-aged actor at the height of his career. Set in 1939, the action takes place in Garry's elegant London flat, where the chaos of his personal and professional life unfolds over the course of a few days.

Present Laughter is a light-hearted comedy that celebrates playwright Noel Coward's legendary wit and larger-than-life persona. Based on Coward himself, actor Garry Essendine is the star of the London theatrical scene at the height of his fame and adored by legions of admirers—perhaps a little too much. Fans regularly throw themselves at Garry's feet, drawn in by his charm and charisma, throwing his household into chaos. In the week before Garry is set to embark on an African tour, he is forced to juggle a besotted young woman with stars in her eyes, an unhinged young playwright obsessed with being in Garry's presence, his best friend's wife who is determined to seduce him, his manager, his producer, his secretary, his estranged ex-wife, and an impending mid-

life crisis as he enters his 40's.

A must-see, so early booking is advisable. Running from Tuesday 15th to Saturday 19th April at Mermaid Arts Centre in Bray, County Wicklow from 7:30pm each evening.

Tickets are available online at: <https://www.mermaidartscentre.ie/whats-on/events/present-laughter>

Or by contacting Mermaid Art Centre in person or by phone on 01 272 4030. Box Office opening hours are Monday to Saturday 11am to 4pm, open until 7.30pm on performance nights.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR - Noelle Clarke

Although relatively new to Square One (Noelle joined in August 2023) she has firmly established herself as an essential member of the

group and the committee.

Noelle is an award-winning actress, a visionary director, and a gifted writer for both stage and screen over her many years in involvement in the industry. Her performances in plays such as Little Gem, Doubt, and The Weir have been widely praised for 'their emotional depth and authenticity', while her direction of Children of a Lesser God, The Librarian, The Wiz, and Godspell 'showcased her exceptional ability to bring powerful stories to life with creativity and precision'. Beyond the stage, Noelle has made a significant impact in film and playwriting, proving her versatility as an artist. Her most recent film There'll be no Divorce is currently on festival circuit and has received many awards for writing, directing, acting and



The cast of Present Laughter in the Orangery, Kilruddery House.

cinematography. Members of Square One had great fun rehearsing and performing her one act play Potential (a fast-paced comedy heralding the joys of speed dating) earlier this year as part of the Bray One Act Festival.

Noelle has also taken a one woman show to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and was widely praised for 'the rollercoaster ride the audience was taken on' and 'a masterclass in tension and nuance'. Her first performance with

Square One was last year when she played Nanny Og in Weir Sisters.

Message from Noelle "I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to take on the task of directing this wonderful play. Noel Cowards

witty and satirical writing in Present Laughter (in a lot of ways semi-autobiographical) has always held my interest and I am very glad to be able to add this to my list of achievements. It has been an absolute pleasure to work

with this cast and crew. Their work ethic has been incredible and the whole process has been such an enjoyable one. I invite you now to sit back, relax and enjoy this witty and satirical somewhat chaotic comedy."

Greystones Players present: Circle Mirror Transformation by Annie Baker

Whale Theatre, Thursday 24th, Friday 25th and Saturday 26th April 8pm (doors 7pm) and Sunday 29th April 2025 at 4pm (doors 3pm) Tickets €20 and €18 and available at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550.

CAST

James - Kevin Keliher

Lauren - Katie Lacey-Curtis

Marty - Niamh Clancy

Schultz - Paul Ring

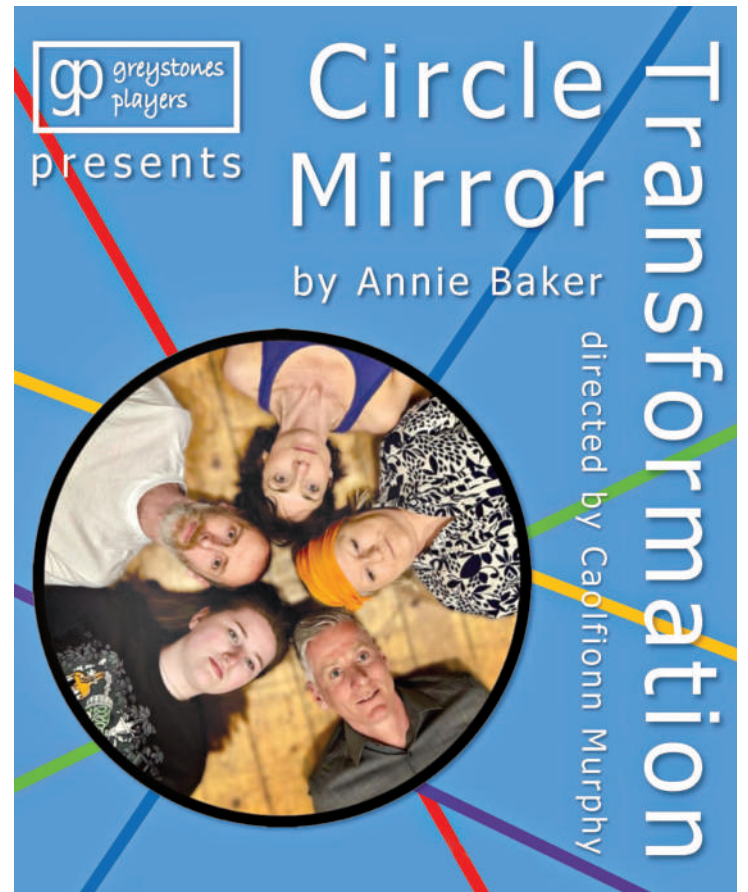
Theresa - Caolfionn Murphy

In a small town in Vermont, New England, five unlikely strangers come together in a community centre for a creative drama class for adults. They are a free-spirited drama teacher Marty, recently divorced Schulz, former actress Teresa, self-conscious high school student Lauren and Marty's elusive husband James. Over six weeks of drama exercises and games, relationships form and falter and their lives become entangled and transformed in hilarious and sometimes heartbreaking ways.

Directed by Caolfionn Murphy, Circle Mirror Transformation is a meditation on theatre, life, death, the passing of time and the ability of people to truly listen to one another. Tender, disarming and unexpected, Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Baker's immaculate play has been called 'absorbing, unblinking and sharply funny' by The New York Times. Enjoy a play that is at once beautifully human and laugh-out-loud relatable by one of America's most exciting playwrights.

This production will be staged 'in the round' which refers to the staging of the play with the audience seated encircling the performance. Some seating will be on cushions on the edge of the stage. Please advise the box office if you have any physical issues, and an appropriate seat reservation will be made.

Age Recommendation: 14+



Wicklow ranks second among Ireland's most popular filming locations

Wicklow has become a favourite among filmmakers, thanks to its stunning landscapes and unique charm, making it the perfect spot for the movies and TV shows you love. Virgin Media Ireland conducted research analysing over 250 top movies and TV shows filmed in Ireland using IMDb data to reveal the most popular filming locations.

Wicklow comes second, proving it's a great place for filming. Dublin is a top spot for filmmakers, with 104 films and TV shows choosing it as their backdrop. From the charming cobbled streets

of Temple Bar to Trinity College Dublin, where Marianne and Connell's complicated relationship unfolds in Normal People. The city's mix of old and new makes it an ideal filming location. Famous

films and TV shows like Kin, Lies We Tell, and The Quiet Girl were all shot here.

Wicklow ranks second with 40 films and TV shows shot there. Its lush forests and historic castles

make it an ideal setting for rom-coms like The Irish Wish starring Lindsay Lohan, as well as gripping psychological thrillers like The Wonder, which was nominated for Best Film at the 2023

Irish Film & Television Awards.

Cork takes third place with fifteen films and one TV show filmed there. Cork is quickly becoming a rising star in the film industry. From the stunning coastlines of West Cork to the lively city streets, like Oliver Plunkett Street, films like The Young Offenders and the hit TV show Bodkin

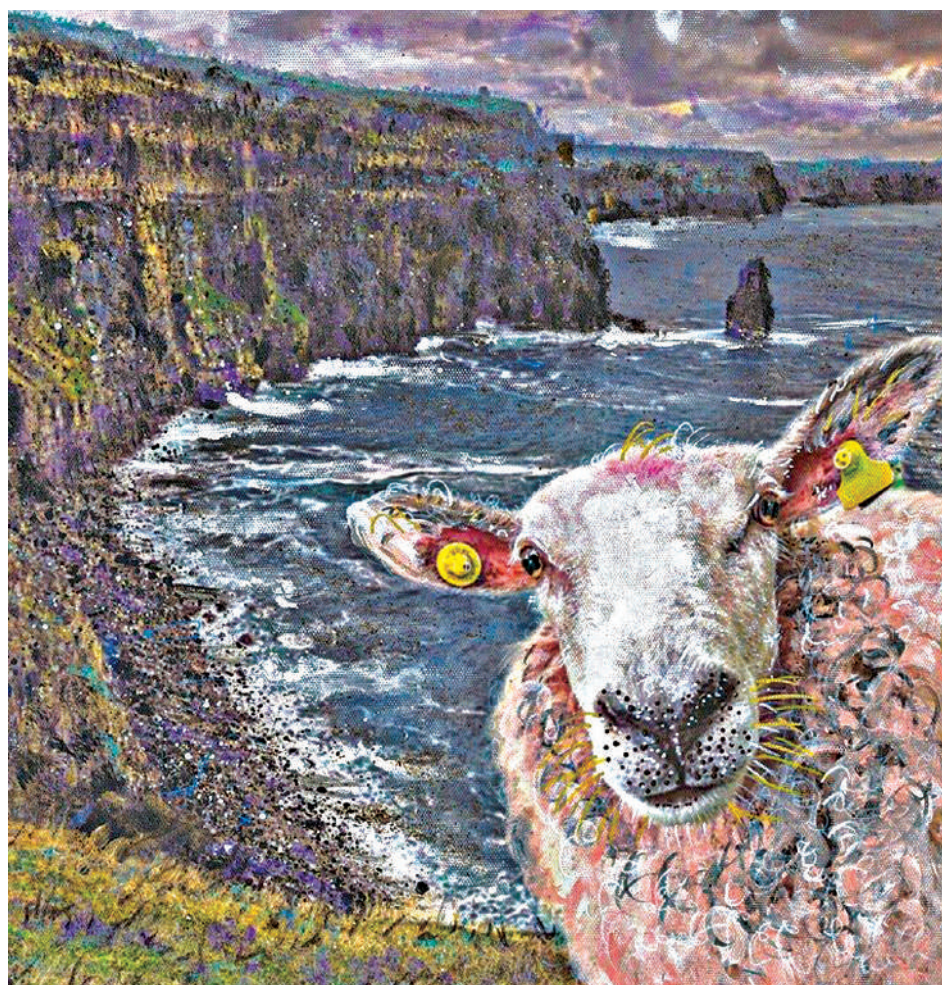
which became the 6th most-watched series on Netflix globally highlight the county's charm.

Galway and Donegal round out the top five counties for filming locations. Galway has appeared in 14 productions, earning a special place among filmmakers. From the breathtaking backdrop of The Banshees of Inisherin to Leap Year,

where Amy Adams' character sets out to propose to her boyfriend but unexpectedly falls for an Irishman, Galway's charm shines through on screen.

Not far behind, Donegal ranks with 13 productions, drawing attention to its wild, untamed landscapes. Famous for its dramatic cliffs and untouched beaches, Donegal has

been featured in films like Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awaken, and more recently In The Land of Saints and Sinners starring Liam Neeson. The epic Slieve League cliffs and the beaches of Malin Head, which famously appeared in Star Wars, prove that Donegal isn't just a star in Ireland it's a star in the galaxy.



Signal Arts Centre is pleased to present the 25th Annual Exhibition of works by members of the Signal Arts Society. Established in 2001, the exhibition has been a showcase for the Society demonstrating the range of expertise and talent of our members. Works include a diverse range of content and mediums. If you interested in becoming a member of Signal Arts Society go to <https://signalartscentre.ie/membership/>. All Welcome. Opening Reception: Friday April 30th 2025 7-9 pm. The exhibition continues through April 27th 2025.

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'Save The Kevin' documentary featuring Wicklow launched in Paris

Director travels to Wicklow in search of the origins of the name Kevin

Wicklow County Council, in partnership with Tourism Ireland, recently launched a new documentary about the name Kevin and the story behind the surge of newborns named Kevin in 1990's France.

The French television station Paris Premiere premiered the documentary, titled 'Save the Kevin', in Paris to an audience of over 200 attendees named Kevin, along with a large team of French and international media representatives.

The documentary explores how, in the early 1990s, France experienced a boom in babies named Kevin, with more than 13,000 new Kevins registered in 1991 alone. The popularity of the name was fuelled by actor Kevin Costner and the character Kevin

McAllister from the movie 'Home Alone'. However, over the past three decades, the name 'Kevin' has faced mockery, comic portrayals, and class prejudice. The film delves into this unique phenomenon through extensive research and interviews, while also tracing the origins of the name Kevin back to Wicklow.

In April 2024, Director Kevin Fafournoux visited Wicklow to further investigate the origins of this popular name. The documentary features a detailed segment on

Glendalough, showcasing stunning visuals of the Glendalough Valley and its monastic site. This section includes a brief history of St. Kevin and the flourishing monastery that thrived for a thousand years.

As part of the launch, a raffle was held with the prize being a trip to County Wicklow. The event was sponsored by Wicklow Wolf Brewery and Glendalough Distillery, who provided refreshments for the evening. Wicklow received significant exposure during the week, promot-

ed through both Paris PremiÈre and Tourism Ireland's social media accounts in France. The raffle attracted over 2,000 entries, which also helped increase the social media following for Visit Wicklow.

"'Save the Kevin' provided an excellent opportunity to showcase Wicklow through a unique project that has a strong media reach in France and beyond," said Fred Verdier, Tourism Officer at Wicklow County Council.

"Beyond the initial screening and PR activi-



The launch of 'Save the Kevin' documentary in Paris including an extensive presentation of Destination Wicklow. Photo credit: Paris Premiere.

ties, this documentary will remain online, offering stunning imagery of Wicklow and Glendalough with each viewing."

Cllr. Paul O'Brien, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, stated, "Promotional events like this help raise the profile of Wicklow as a destination for potential overseas visitors. I'm also pleased that Wicklow Wolf, Glendalough Dist-

illery, The Martello, and Heather House supported this project." Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, noted, "The support of Tourism Ireland for this event and production was greatly appreciated. Wicklow County Council strives to maximize every opportunity to showcase the beauty and heritage of the Garden of Ireland."



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning permission is sought by Philip Doyle and Brenda Ni Chathlain for retention of an existing large low freestanding workshop building and access driveway, located to the rear of their property at Calary View, Glasnamullen, Kilmacanogue, Co Wicklow, Eircode A98AH31, and which has been in existence since 1977, long before the applicants purchased the property. The application also seeks retention of single storey extensions to the North (side) and East (rear) sides of the house, and retention of a small front porch, all of which were constructed in 1999. The application further seeks retention of a small conservatory extension to the South-East corner of the house. This small conservatory was constructed in 2012. This application seeks to tidy-up the planning status of these various historical elements as here listed. 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

I, BNRG Ballymoney Limited, intend to apply for permission for development at this site: within the townland of Ballymoney, Arklow, Co. Wicklow. The development will consist of: Permission to amend the design of the approved development (Planning Reference: 19/627 and ABP-305289-19) which comprises consent for a Solar Farm within a site area of 19 hectares consisting of solar photovoltaic panels covering an area of up to 9.8ha on ground mounted steel frames, 1 no. on-site substation; 3 no. inverter/transformer stations, underground cables and ducts, boundary security fence, new internal tracks, CCTV cameras and all associated site services. Planning permission is sought for a period of 10 years. Proposed amendments include (1) relocation of part of the internal access track, and (2) a gate will be added along the access track. 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. The planning application may be viewed online at www.wicklow.ie, under planning online enquiries. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee, €20, within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application, and such submissions or observations will be considered by the planning authority in making a decision on the application. The planning authority may grant permission subject to or without condition, or may refuse to grant permission.

Volvo pricing & specification updates for the new model year

Volvo cars have been firmly established in Ireland since the 1960s as a premium brand renowned for safety, durability and suitability for outdoorsy country life.

Collectors pine after that 1970s icon, the 245 GL estate, and the qualities of that car are still embedded in the modern Volvos such as the XC 30, 40 60 and 90 and their electric brothers.

What is amazing is that you still see 40 and 50-year-old Volvos in everyday use on Wicklow roads. They are tough!

Volvo is heading to its centenary in 2027, and while its gene pool in pure Swedish, it is today part of the Chinese Geely group

and benefits from the battery and IT technology of that huge car company.

Volvo were quick to go on their electric journey but plug in hybrids make up a big proportion of their record worldwide sales last year of 763,389 cars.

Wicklow has long been home to many Volvos and today Volvo are ably represented by Volvo Cars Wexford, part of the Boland Group.

Volvo Car Ireland have announced new pricing and

specification details for the new model year.

The all-electric Volvo EX40 & EC40 now have a new starting price of €48,990, representing a price reduction of €3,255 from the previous model year. As the electric space continues to grow in Ireland, this new price point provides a more competitive offering to Volvo customers as demand increases for electric cars. This comes at a time when

Volvo Car Ireland

relaunches its bestselling model, the Volvo XC60.

EX40 & EC40

- New starting price of Volvo EX40 & EC40: €48,990* (a €3,255 reduction)
- New exterior colours: Aurora Silver, Forest Lake & Denim Blue
- New Black Edition exterior colours: Crystal White, Denim Blue and Vapour Grey.
- Both EC40 & EX40 come with PCP finance of 1.95%**
- Now available to order for July delivery.

Refreshed XC60

- Starting price of refreshed XC60 plug-in hybrid: €67,145
- New exterior colours: Mulberry red, Aurora Silver and Forest Lake
- New Black Edition exterior colours: Crystal White, Denim Blue and Vapour Grey.
- Refreshed XC60 comes with PCP finance of 3.95%
- Now available to order for July delivery.
- The EC40 and EX40 are as compelling as ever, with Google built-in and smart interior storage,

each offering an electric range of up to 576 kilometres and 569 kilometres respectively. New exterior colours include Aurora Silver, Forest Lake & Denim Blue.

Earlier this year, Volvo Car Ireland announced that the XC60 would receive a significant refresh, featuring key updates in user experience, design and comfort along with a faster and more responsive infotainment system. Order books are now open for the XC60 plug-in hybrid, with a starting price of €67,145.



Volvo EX40 & EC40.

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SIPTU says Minister must discuss strict CCPC conditions on BNM Recycling sale

SIPTU has called on Minister for Climate, Environment and Energy, Darragh O'Brien, to meet Bord na Mona (BNM) Recycling workers to discuss the implications of legally binding commitments placed on the company's proposed sale by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC).

SIPTU Divisional Organiser, Adrian Kane, said: "The CCPC yesterday (Thursday, 10th April) placed a number of legally binding conditions on the proposed sale of Bord na Mona Recycling to the KWD Group. It is clear from the CCPC statement on the sale that the state agency is concerned about the monopolisation of the domestic waste market by a handful of private companies and the detrimental impact that this will have for consumers and the environment."

"SIPTU members have raised many concerns about this sale of the last publicly owned domestic waste collection service. It would seem that the CCPC shares at least some of these concerns, in particular the impact this merger could have on competition in the domestic waste sector in Munster and Leinster."

"In its statement the CCPC has also reiterated its position that 'the household waste collection market in Ireland is not delivering strong outcomes for consumers', that 'structural changes are required' and that 'an economic regulator' for the sector should be established."

"We agree with this position and

believe the most effective structural change to the market would be the State utilising Bord na Múna Recycling to provide a publicly owned alternative to the for profit private domestic waste companies. This is the approach in most other European countries and one that should not be squandered by its sale."

"Our members have on a number of occasions requested to meet Minister Darragh O'Brien to discuss the many issues surrounding this proposed sale. We are reiterating this request as the ball is now firmly in the Minister's court as he has final sign off on whether the sale goes ahead or not."

He added: "As well as the wider implications of this proposed sale and the other issues surrounding the domestic waste market, our members wish to discuss with him the protection of their terms and conditions of employment. They believe that he should be concerned about any removal of collective bargaining rights in the sector when the Programme for Government has a commitment for an 'action plan' to expand these rights to cover more of the economy."

CLASSIFIEDS

Gospel: Luke 21:1-4

Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury of the temple. He also saw a poor widow, who dropped in two small coins. And he said, 'Truly, I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all of them. For all of them gave an offering from their plenty; but she, out of her poverty, gave all she had to live on.'



Louise McCabe, Brian Connolly and Valerie Creaton at the Thomas Pender Memorial Run in Arklow in aid of the Irish Lung Fibrosis Association.

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Friday 1st of May we will be there instead of Thursday 9.30-2pm. If Funeral is on in car park we will close until service ends as a mark of Respect.
• In **Kilcoole** we are parked by the Circle K garage, near the church.
• In **Blessington** we are parked in the square, near the Lemon Tree (which is now closed)

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- DI** Furniture Design & Carpentry/Joinery
- DC** Fashion & Textiles
- DJ** Furniture Design & Cabinet Making (Advanced)

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- MI** DJ Techniques & Music Production
- MJ** Music Production
- MK** Music Performance
- MF** Sound Engineering

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- EC** Personal Trainer, Strength & Conditioning
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- HE** Social Studies & Community Care

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- FG** Hairdressing - Senior Stylist
- FH** Barbering
- FD** Nail Technician & Salon Administration

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- HK** Science - Pre-University
- HZ** Food Science with Dietetics - Pre-University
- JF** Pharmacy Retail Assistant
- JJ** Pharmacy Technician
- HU** Applied Ecology and Biodiversity Studies
- DK** Horticulture & Garden Design
- HV** Engineering Pre-University

BUSINESS

- JA** Business Management & Administration
- JC** Business Management - Advanced Certificate
- JD** Accounting Technician
- LD** Business Tourism Advanced Certificate
- SD** Legal Administration Pre-University Law
- SF** Medical Administration (Mornings Only)
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- JT** Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship
- EE** Security & Pre-Garda
- JP** B.Bus (Hons) Business & Psychology

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- LE** Culinary Arts Advanced
- LG** Pastry, Baking & Barista
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ADULT LEAVING CERT

- RB** Adult Leaving Certificate

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- HB** Nursing and Midwifery Studies - Pre-University
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