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Tuesday 29th April 2025 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

# WICKLOW'S PAC MAN

In the past number of years Wicklow has had two Ministers of Health, a Taoiseach and a Tániste and last Friday County Wicklow secured another high profile political post with the appointment of John Brady TD as chair of the powerful oireachtas committee-the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).



John Brady TD.

Newly-appointed chairperson on the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), John Brady TD, has vowed to hold the government and state bodies to account for how they spend taxpayers' money.

Deputy Brady made his comments after Mary Lou McDonald announced that he would chair the PAC as one of a record seven Sinn Féin chairpersons - four men and three women - of Oireachtas committees in

this Dáil term.

Brady brings a wealth of experience of the committee to the role, having served on the PAC in the last Dáil.

Brady said: "The public deserve to have confidence that the taxes they pay to the State are spent appropriately and deliver value for money, and it is the job of the Public Accounts Committee to hold the government and state bodies to account.

"In the last Dáil, I was proud to play my part on



Amahle Sibanda, Alex Gammell, Ali Ryan, Eva McGinn and Eve Smillie at the St. Joseph's National School Newtown Talent Show in the Parkview Hotel. Pic: Michael Kelly.

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PAC as we exposed the financial scandals at RTÉ and the colossal mismanagement by government of the National Children's Hospital project. People are sick to their back teeth of seeing their taxes wasted by successive Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael coalitions.

"In the dying days of the last government, we had the drip-feed of shocking levels of waste - €336,000 on a bike shed, €500,000 on private jet flights for Simon Harris, €1.4m on a security hut, €9m on phone pouches, and the biggest one of all, the €1.5bn overspend on the Children's Hospital.

"Four months into 2025 and there is no end in sight, and no accountability - nearly half a million euro spent by the OPW on a perimeter

wall, almost €7m wasted by the Arts Council on a failed IT project, while my Sinn Féin colleague Mark Ward has uncovered that the HSE has thrown away €7m since 2022 for not paying their bills on time.

"Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the state agencies their governments are supposed to oversee have been wasting taxpayers' money at extreme levels. The culture of waste and unaccountability that they have overseen has to stop and as chair of the PAC, I will ensure that those responsible are held to account.

"There's important work ahead, and I'm looking forward to getting stuck in. I intend to work constructively with all committee members to make the PAC as effective as it can be."

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**Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN TD**

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**RATHDRUM**

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### Herbert Road protest on May 13th

Local Aontú advocate Ciarán Hogan is leading a protest against the proposed closure of the Herbert Road access to the N11. The protest will be taking place on Tuesday May 13th, not May 16th as printed in Wicklow Times in 15th April edition. The public who oppose the proposal are invited to walk the entire length of Herbert Road in Bray, ending at the Municipal District council meeting in the Town Hall above McDonald's. 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, Kilarney 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.

### Shankill Classical Music Club

The next meeting is on Wednesday 14th May. Usual time - 7:45 to 10:00 pm, including a teabreak - and place - Shankill Day Centre, Lower Rd, Shankill (100 yds from the main street, car parking available). The music will be as always: a varied programme of classical music on CDs, covering many genres - orchestral, instrumental, vocal, opera etc. - in a friendly setting. Visitors and new and returning members are always welcome. You don't need to be an expert! There's no charge on the night. For further info phone or text John at 0872109175.

### Greystones Flower Club

The next meeting is on Tuesday 29th April where the demonstrator will be Ms Ali Dietrich. It will take place at 8pm in The Evangelical Church Hall, Hillside Road, Greystones. Tea/coffee will be served. Non members very welcome. Entrance €10 for the evening or €35 yearly membership.

### Loreto Bray class of '75 reunion

Were you in the Loreto Bray class of 1975? You are invited to join your former classmates for a reunion on Tuesday 24th June 2025 at 7.30pm in Butler and Barry in Bray. Please call 089 427 7069.

### Shankill Book Sale

The Shankill Day Centre Book Sale takes place on the first Saturday of each month, in Shankill Day Care Centre, Lower Road, Shankill (D18 HW95), from 10am to 1pm. Donations of good quality, clean books greatly appreciated on day of sale (2 bags per person).

# Greystones community launches fundraiser to honour beloved local legend Bridie Mooney

Greystones Town Team and Greystones Tidy Towns have come together to launch a special community fundraiser in memory of one of the town's most treasured figures - Bridie Mooney.

For over 60 years, Bridie ran Mooney's shop on Trafalgar Road - a small store that became the heart of the community. Whether it was coal, cleaning supplies, hand-made furniture, or a well-earned treat after school, Bridie had it all. But more than what she sold, it was how she showed up - every single day - with warmth, care, and an open heart, that made her so loved by generations of local families.

To celebrate her incredible contribution to the town, funds are now being raised for a 9ft-high corten steel totem to be installed at Greystones Railway Station. The totem will feature a beautiful portrait of Mrs. Mooney by Greystones-based artist Tom Byrne and serve as a permanent reminder of the role she played in the life of the town.

"This is more than a tribute," said a spokesperson from Greystones Town Team. "It's a way to honour someone who was the centre of her community for more than six decades - and to keep her presence alive in the streets she helped shape."

The fundraiser is now live on GoFundMe <https://gofund.me/6ce0d587> and everyone is invited to take part. All donors will be welcomed to a special totem unveiling event, where there will be sweets shared in Bridie's honour. The most generous supporters will also be acknowledged on a framed poster displayed



Bridie Mooney in her shop in 2015

beside the totem. Bridie retired on Christmas Eve 2015 after 62 years behind the counter, and when she passed away in

September 2020, her

funeral procession through Greystones was met with a spontaneous round of applause - a powerful testament to how

much she meant to this town. Now, with the help of her community, Bridie Mooney's story will live on - not just in memory,

but in a place of pride for all to see.

Donate today and help celebrate a true Greystones legend. See <https://gofund.me/6ce0d587>

## New Digital Help Service from Bray CIC

Bray Citizens Information Centre (CIC) is pleased to announce the introduction of its new Digital Help Service where a member of staff will support you to access government services which are online.

They can help you with creating a new email address and setting up myGov.id account to get you started. The range of online services they support you with include Social Welfare Applications, the National Childcare Scheme, Driving License Renewals, Choices Based Letting, Password Renewals, SUSI App-lications and Revenue Online. You will need a smart phone to conduct these transactions and to make an appointment.

Martina Cronin, Development Manager stated "as government services are rapidly going online, we are here to help our customers who may find it difficult to engage with these inter-

net platforms."

Information Officer in Bray CIC, Sarah Greene, added "the push to go online is because these applications can typically be processed more quickly and have a faster turnaround time. My colleague, Julie, and I are here to show our customers how to navigate these online platforms and to provide direct assistance if necessary".

Funded by the Citizens Information Board, the Citizens Information

Service provides information, advice and advocacy on social welfare and other social issues such as employment, health services, housing, education, family matters, consumer rights and more.

A growing number of customers require in-depth assistance and CIS plays an important role in providing advocacy with, or on behalf of, those people who need it, including people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, lone parents,

the Travelling Community, prisoners, geographically isolated people and those who may not have access to digital resources. Basically anyone working or living in County Wicklow who has an issue that needs addressing or is at a crossroads in their lives.

For anyone needing free, impartial, confidential and informed advice and support the CIS is here to help. To find out their opening hours or if you would like us to

address a specific query or to book an appointment with a member of their team please contact your local Citizens Information Centre in Bray CIC on 0818 07 6780. They also have an office in Arklow where you can drop-in, telephone or make an appointment. Telephone: Arklow on 0818 07 6750.

Their website [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) has their opening hours and is packed full of helpful information.

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Shay Fitzmaurice, Managing Editor - [shay@localtimes.ie](mailto:shay@localtimes.ie)

Ian Colgan, News Editor - [ian@localtimes.ie](mailto:ian@localtimes.ie)

Sales / General enquiries - [info@localtimes.ie](mailto:info@localtimes.ie)



# ‘Tenant in Situ cuts will drive up homelessness’

John Brady TD has hit out at the Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Lowry Government for slashing funding to the Tenant in Situ scheme - a move that has led to Wicklow County Council suspending new applications to the scheme, putting families at serious risk of homelessness.

Speaking following confirmation from Wicklow County Council, Brady said: “The decision to suspend the Tenant in Situ scheme in Wicklow is deeply alarming and will have devastating consequences for vulnerable households. This follows the Government’s cynical cuts and changes to the scheme ó changes that are not only heartless but will actively drive more people into homelessness.

“Wicklow County Council has now suspended the acceptance of any new applications and is awaiting clarity from Minister James Brown and the Department of Housing. This delay and uncertainty will push families over the edge. The Tenant in Situ scheme has been a crucial mechanism in stopping people from losing their homes. In

2023, it prevented 26 households in Wicklow from becoming homeless. So far in 2024, up to November, a further 18 households were saved from homelessness thanks to this scheme.

“That is the kind of impact that proper funding and political will can deliver - real, tangible support for people who are at risk. Cutting that lifeline is cruel, and Minister James Brown must urgently reconsider this position. He must recognise that this shameful decision will directly result in families in Wicklow being pushed into homelessness. There is no other outcome unless these cuts are reversed.

“The reality is, under this Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Lowry Government, homelessness has reached the highest level ever

recorded in the history of the state. That is the legacy of this Government’s housing policies. And now, instead of addressing the crisis with urgency and compassion, they are compounding it by dismantling one of the few effective measures available to stop people from falling into homelessness.

“This is a deeply cynical and short-sighted move. It will not reduce the need for housing - it will only reduce the number of people who are able to stay in their homes. That’s the simple truth. The Tenant in Situ scheme must be fully reinstated, and proper funding provided to Wicklow County Council without delay. We need real action, not more excuses. Families in Wicklow deserve to be protected, not abandoned.”

# Fine Gael council seat to be filled



Pictured are contestants for the vacant Fine Gael county council seat, Rebecca Molloy and Ned Whelan.

The vacancy that occurred when Aoife Flynn Kennedy resigned her county council seat when appointed a senior executive officer in Dun Laoghaire County Council is to be filled next Tuesday 6th May.

Contesting for the seat are Rebecca Molloy; a native of Bray who stood un-successfully for Fine Gael in Dun Laoghaire in last year’s local elections, and Ned Whelan. Ned, a resident of Bray, stood for the party in the Bray East ward in the 2019 local elections and is well known as Chairman of East Coast Credit Union and co-treasurer of Fine Gael in County Wicklow.

# Whitmore calls for action on Uisce Eireann issues

Speaking in the Dáil recently, Social Democrats TD, Jennifer Whitmore, addressed the numerous local issues with Uisce Eireann, highlighting the systemic failures and calling for urgent government action.

"Despite the significant investment and political will behind Uisce Eireann, they continue to struggle with basic issues," Deputy Whitmore stated.

"In my constituency, there were multiple issues last year alone with Uisce Eireann. Over Christmas, a pump failure in Bray allowed sewage to be pumped onto the beach for four days. This led to the cancellation of the annual charity swim and meant that people could not swim in the sea for five days in Bray. There were also sewage leaks into the harbour at Greystones during this period, which led Wicklow County Council to prohibit swimming at Greystones Harbour Environs, Greystones Cove Beach and Greystones South Beach," Deputy Whitmore explained.

"There were also issues with the Three Trouts River in Greystones last year where sewage flowing into the river turned the water grey and people in the surrounding area were not leaving their homes due to the smell. There were serious concerns around the wildlife living in the river at this time, Deputy Whitmore noted.


"At the moment, there are ongoing odour issues around the wastewater plants in Greystones and the Murrough. These are simple things that should be resolved, yet there's no indication that Uisce Eireann is on top of it, despite public calls for action.

"In 2023, Uisce Eireann reported 1,141 short-duration environmental incidents, half of which were due to equipment breakdowns and maintenance issues. Many of the issues that they report are small, once-off, easy fixes. For example, alarms not going off when a pump stops or a generator fails. These are not large-scale infrastructure failures; they are basic issues that Uisce Eireann should be able to fix. Staff on the ground are doing their best to address these issues but there is a lack of focus on a senior level impeding them," Deputy Whitmore continued.

"There are too many instances where Uisce Eireann is not meeting the standard that we need from our highly invested in and highly resourced national water company. The government needs to ensure that, when Uisce Eireann is tasked with a job, they do that job and do it properly," Deputy Whitmore concluded.



Jodie Doyle, Antal Szabo, Tony Battle and Geoff Michael at the Wicklow Sings Festival 2025 in Temple Carrig School in Greystones.




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# Greystones hosts second Climate Action Forum

Representatives from various community and sports groups gathered for Greystones' second Climate Action Forum, held at Greystones Golf Club on Saturday 12th April, from 2-5pm. The event, organised by Wicklow County Council, welcomed participants from Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole, Killincarrig, Newcastle, and Newtownmountkennedy.

Building on the success of the inaugural forum held in Burnaby Park last September, which was led by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with support from Wicklow County Council and the Bray and North Wicklow Area Partnership, this event continued to foster collaboration and momentum around local climate action.

The forum was officially opened by Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District, Cllr Tom Fortune. He praised Rob Mooney from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications for his leadership in launching the forum and commended Wicklow County Council for advancing the initiative.

"Events like these are

essential," Cllr. Fortune remarked. "They help shine a light on success stories, inspire others to get involved, and create vital connections across individuals and community groups working towards a shared goal of making our community more sustainable and climate-resilient. They also remind us that we are not working alone, but as part of a larger, passionate community striving

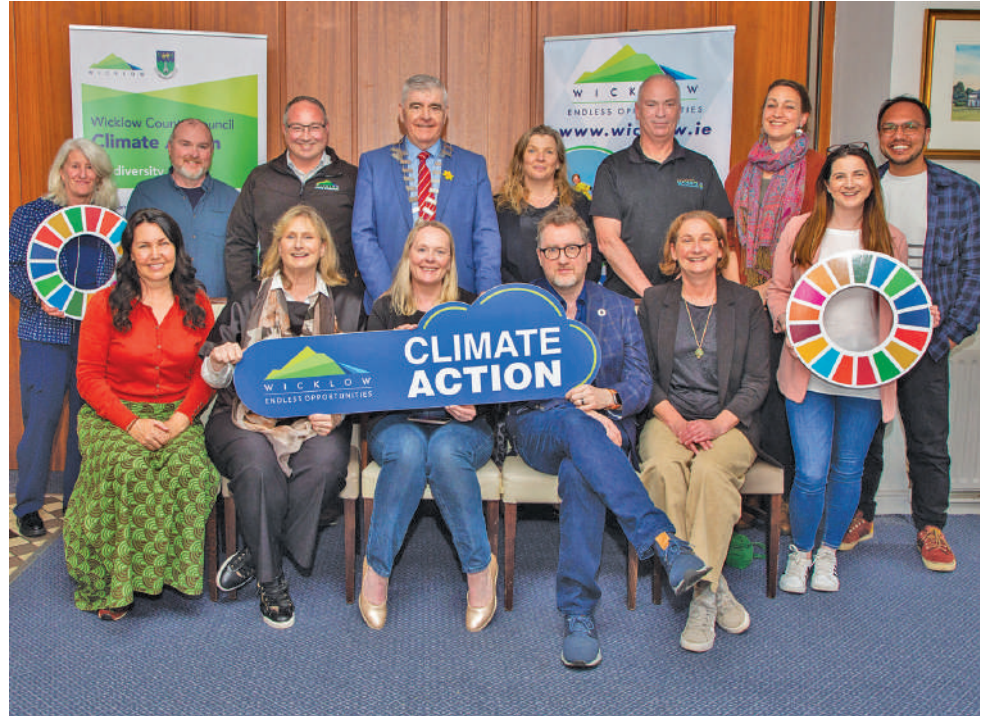
for a better future."

Wicklow County Council Chief Executive Emer O'Gorman echoed this sentiment, stating, "I'm delighted with the success of the Climate Action Community Forum held in Greystones. Events like this highlight the incredible passion, innovation, and commitment that exist in our communities when it comes to tackling climate change. From grassroots groups to sporting organizations, it's inspiring to see so many people come together to build a greener, more sustainable future for all.

This forum wasn't just about sharing ideas; it was about creating real momentum and forging meaningful connections. The level of engagement and enthusiasm shown proves that climate action is not just a responsibility - it's a community opportunity. Together, we are laying the groundwork for lasting change, and the council looks forward to continuing this important journey with all of you."

The forum featured a series of insightful presentations on key climate topics, including:

- Dr. Robert Mooney (Department of Environment, Climate and



(L to R) Deirdre Joyce (Community Benefit Fund - Codling Wind Park), Simon Whelan (Sustainable Energy Communities Programme for Sports Clubs), Mark Costello (Climate Change Coordinator Wicklow County Council), Tom Fortune (Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District), Liz Dillon (Greystones 2 Go Cup Scheme), Justin Ivory (Local Authority Waters Programme), Mide O'Sullivan (Green Clubs Programme for Greystones), Alison Keogh (Wicklow Partnership), Aadarsh Das (Moby E-Mobility Bikes), Julie Sammiller (Community Climate Action Programme Wicklow County Council), Cllr Orla Finn, Olive Farrell (Eire Og GAA Experience of Programme), Dr. Robert Mooney (Department of Environment, Climate and Communications Update) and Cllr Lourda Scott. Photo by Mick Kelly.



Austin Baines and Olive Farrell.



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Communications) - An update on the Climate Action Works Programme

- Aadarsh Das (Moby E-Mobility) - Demonstration of the e-mobility bike scheme coming to Greystones
- Liz Dillon (Greystones Tidy Towns) - The potential impact of reusable cup schemes such as 2 Go Cups on waste reduction
- Julie Sammiller - Overview of the Community Climate Action Programme
- Olive Farrell (Eire Og Greystones) - Insights on how the club is becoming

more sustainable

- Mide O'Sullivan - The benefits of the GAA Green Clubs Programme

- Simon Whelan (Wicklow SEC Mentor) - How sports clubs can benefit as a Sustainable Energy Community
- Deirdre Joyce (Codling Wind Park Community Liaison Officer) - Information on the potential future with the Community Benefit Fund
- Alison Keogh (Wicklow Partnership) - Funding programmes available for community groups

During the event, atten-

dees were polled on their views about climate change and local sustainability:

- 50% said they were alarmed, with 25% anxious and a further 25% unsettled by climate change
- 93% said they would use or consider using the upcoming e-mobility bike scheme
- 94% said they would use a reusable cup or participate in a 2 Go Cup scheme to reduce disposable cup waste
- 94% expressed a desire for sports clubs and com-

munity groups to adopt more sustainable practices

- 97% said they would consider making greener choices at home or in their community
- Over 80% believed it is still possible to reverse the worst impacts of climate change

The strong turnout and high level of engagement at the forum reflect a growing commitment among local community groups and sports clubs to work together toward a more sustainable, climate-resilient future for the Greystones area.



Ed Melvin, Rebecca Gill and Lesley Ann Whelan.



# 'This is not a solution'

Progress has been made regarding a new service to provide public transport access to Dublin Airport for North Wicklow residents, Tánaiste Simon Harris TD said.

The decision by Aircoach to withdraw its 702 service has left thousands of residents in Bray, Greystones, Kilcoole, and Delgany without a direct public transport link to the airport.

Following direct engagement by the Tánaiste, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has approved an application by Wexford Bus to serve additional stops, most notably Kilmacanogue, on its route.

Greystones Councillor Lourda Scott was less than enthusiastic about this news, however: "I say we should be doing far better than that," she said. "Not only is this impossible for those with early morning or late-night flights, but is simply not a viable option for any vulnerable travellers. In addition a car will be needed to get to the stop in the first place."

In a statement, the Tánaiste said: "I am delighted to announce that significant progress has been made in relation to public transport access for residents in the north of County Wicklow who want to fly from Dublin Airport.

"This progress follows Aircoach's regrettable decision to end their 702 service which previously served both Bray and Greystones, leaving many residents without a public transport option to access Dublin Airport.

"As soon as I became aware of the service cancellation back in February, I immediately sought alternative solutions to support the affected communities. I would like to commend Wexford Bus for their receptiveness and constructive approach to my enquiries, and I can now announce that Wexford Bus has had their application to serve Kilmacanogue as an additional stop has been granted by the NTA.

"The next step is for Wicklow

County Council give the green light for this additional stop, and I will continue to work to ensure this happens without delay."

The Tánaiste added: "I am sure that this announcement will be a great relief to many and will undoubtedly help holiday-goers as we move into the Summer months."

Cllr Scott had recently criticised the National Transport Authority (NTA) for its refusal to engage with local representatives and its failure to provide solutions to the loss of direct public transport between North Wicklow and Dublin Airport. She was also less than enthusiastic about the news that Wexford Bus being able to pick up passengers in Kilmacanogue.

Councillor Scott brought a formal request, through Wicklow County Council and Greystones Municipal District Council for a meeting with the NTA to discuss replacing the service, along with other issues. This was refused. The NTA has also ruled out the possibility of introducing a Public Service Obligation (PSO) route to serve the affected areas.

Speaking on the matter recently, Cllr Scott said: "The NTA's reluctance to meet with elected representatives is very disappointing. We are best placed to know the needs of our community yet the very organisation responsible for public transport planning is refusing to engage with us. The NTA attended a Council meeting in October, however that was prior to the cancellation of the Aircoach service and indeed before the issues that have arisen with the new Bus Connects routes. If they are not willing to meet with Councillors in response to these problems, then who are they answering to?"

She also criticised the lack of

any concrete plan to replace the lost service, highlighting the significant difficulties now faced by many groups, including airport workers, all of whom relied on a direct and efficient airport link.

"This is a major public transport gap affecting over 60,000 people, and the NTA has dismissed the issue entirely. Instead of working towards a solution, the news that the Wexford Bus will be able to pick people up from Kilmacanogue is being touted as a win.

"North Wicklow is one of the largest commuter areas in the country, and public transport should reflect that. The refusal to engage with those raising the issue is completely unacceptable."

In correspondence with Greystones Municipal District Offices in March, the NTA stated "The NTA has no plans at present to provide a Public Service Obligation (PSO) direct bus between North Wicklow and Dublin Airport following the decision by Aircoach to withdraw their commercial service from the area. In terms of travel options between North Wicklow and Dublin Airport, there are a number of PSO services which are available via interchange with other services. Further information on these options can be assessed by visiting the TFI (Transport for Ireland) Journey Planner website or via the TFI Live app. It is also open to other commercial bus operators to seek a new operating licence or to amend an existing licence in order to deliver similar type services to those previously provided by Aircoach."

Cllr Scott is calling on the NTA to reconsider its stance and to properly assess the need for a direct airport connection from North Wicklow.



Summer Doyle and Rachel Brady at the St. Joseph's National School Newtown Talent Show in the Parkview Hotel.



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Lár Bailte ar dTús  
Town Centre First

**BALTINGLASS HEALTH CHECK &  
NEW TOWN TEAM INFORMATION EVENT**  
Wednesday 7th May 2025 5.00pm to 8.00pm  
The Hillfort Room, Baltinglass Library.



A Town Health Check consultation, supported by Queen's University Belfast, will be held on 7th May between 5.00pm and 8.00pm to assess the economic, social, and physical condition of the town centre. This consultation will identify the town's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, focusing on aspects such as local businesses, infrastructure, public spaces, community facilities, and accessibility. The findings will inform future regeneration efforts and guide the Town Centre First initiative.

We encourage all members of the public and local businesses to attend at any time between 5pm and 8pm to share their views and experiences. Your input will help shape a town centre that is vibrant, attractive, and welcoming for work, living, and visiting. A Town Health Check Questionnaire is available via the attached QR code, and we look forward to your participation in both completing the questionnaire and attending the consultation.

Additionally, Wicklow County Council is establishing a Town Centre First Team in 2025, as part of the National Town Centre First policy. This team, supported by the Town Regeneration Officer (TRO), will be central to the delivery of a Town Centre First strategy and vision for Baltinglass. At the event, the TRO will present on the formation of the Town Team at 5pm, 6pm, and 7pm.

The Town Team will typically consist of representatives from local businesses, community groups, residents, tourism organisations, An Garda Síochána, charities, social enterprises, sports organisations, cultural groups, voluntary groups, chambers of commerce, retailers, developers, and educational institutions. They will play a vital role in implementing the Town Centre First strategy, ensuring the town's unique needs and characteristics are reflected in its development and revitalisation.

**Your Town, Your Plan – Get Involved**



Lisa O'Riordan and Kim Harris at the Wicklow Sings Festival 2025 in Temple Carrig School, Greystones.



# Wheels in motion for Bike Week 2025

*Pedal into adventure, romance, and fun!*

Wicklow is gearing up for an exciting week on two wheels as Bike Week 2025 returns from 10th to 18th May, bringing a full calendar of cycling celebrations to communities across the county. The center piece of the week's events will be the Wicklow Town Bike Week Festival, taking place on Thursday, 15th May from 4-7pm in the Murrough Carpark.

This free, all-ages event promises an unforgettable afternoon of cycling fun, featuring a packed line-up designed to get everyone in the saddle. At the heart of the festival will be a full-sized Street Velodrome, giving visitors the chance to test their speed and skill on a thrilling track set up right in the Murrough Carpark, overlooking the seafront. Festival-goers can also enjoy a lively outdoor spin

class, learn to ride at the Learn to Cycle area, or unleash their creativity at Pimp My Bike, where they can add colourful decorations, lights, and accessories to their bikes.

Adding a completely new twist to this year's festival is a never-before-seen event that is set to turn heads and may even spark a love story. In collaboration with TikTok influencer The Dating Orange, Wicklow is launching its

first-ever Singles Tandem Love Cycle. This fun and light-hearted blind date experience will pair participants aged 18 and over for a scenic tandem bike ride through Wicklow Town. After a 30-minute ride together, each pair will enjoy a free pizza date to see if any chemistry blossoms. The deadline to apply for this date is April 30th. Visit <https://wicklowlsp.ie> for more information.

Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Paul O'Brien expressed his enthusiasm for this year's unique program: "We are thrilled to bring such an energetic and inclusive lineup to Wicklow for Bike Week 2025. The new activities added this year offer something totally different. I encourage everyone to come down to the Murrough for this year's festival and the street velo-

drome. We look forward to seeing the streets filled with bikes and big smiles."

Beyond the flagship event in Wicklow Town, Bike Week will feature activities across the county throughout the week. Ballinastoe Woods will host mountain biking sessions, while Blessington will offer a Cycle and Sauna experience. For those looking to build confidence or learn the basics, Learn to Cycle sessions and Bike Maintenance Workshops will be available in various locations countywide, providing valuable skills for riders of all ages and abilities.

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, highlighted the importance of the week: "Bike Week is a fantastic opportunity to promote cycling, wellness, sustainability, and community connection. With events happening in every corner of Wicklow, there's something for everyone to enjoy - whether you're tackling the trails or just learning to ride."

Theresa O'Brien, Director of Service at Wicklow County



Denise O'Shea and Adam Rochford of Wicklow LSP.



Adam Rochford, Denise O'Shea, Cllr Paul O'Brien, Ashley Wynne and Aisling Hubbard of Wicklow LSP.

Council, added: "The energy around Bike Week this year is incredible. We are celebrating cycling in all its forms. It's about encouraging people to get out, have fun, and maybe even try something new."

Bike Week 2025 in Wicklow promises to be one of the most dynamic and inclusive yet, inviting people of all ages and backgrounds to experience the joy and freedom of cycling. So pump up your

tires, grab a helmet, and join in the adventure!

For more details about the full schedule of events and how to participate, visit <https://wicklowlsp.ie> or follow @activewicklow on social media.

## Remembering Bray's Eddie Jordan

The whole Formula One Grand Prix world stood still for three minutes at last month's Chinese Grand Prix, to watch and listen to a superb 3-minute tribute by Bono to Eddie Jordan, who died in Cape Town just three days earlier (20th March). Hundreds of millions watched it on TV.

*By Martin McCarthy*

Eddie was not born in Bray but spent a lot of his childhood there as his father, Paddy, was a Bray native and Paddy's sister Lilian was Eddie's favourite aunt, who spoilt him rotten.

He and his parents and sister Helen lived in Dartry, South Dublin, which was connected directly by train to Bray and Eddie would spend almost every weekend with spinster Aunt Lilian.

He loved Bray and the surrounds and learnt to drive the family's Ford Anglia while his parents played golf in the old Bray golf course located beside the River Dargle.

Eddie spent winters and summers in Bray and developed his love of motorsport from his Bray-born cousin Noel Smith, a rally champion driver and solicitor.

The Rathdrum and Wicklow races were gone by the time Eddie was of driving age, but he competed at Hillclimbs at Callery (beside the Sugar Loaf), Enniskerry and elsewhere around the county.

His mother Eileen was a loyal member of Bray Golf Club and played into her 80s. What he achieved was simply amazing. He was a champion driver winning the premier class Formula Atlantic Irish championship in 1978. In 1979 he left his ten-year career at Bank of Ireland and emigrated to

become a professional driver in England. But at 29 he was way too old, so he started his own race team and ran it very successfully in the 1980s. In 1990 he put every penny he had - and a lot more - on starting his own Grand Prix team - which had a largely glittering existence winning multiple Grand Prix and almost winning the 1999 World Championships. The team were enabled to win thanks to Benson & Hedges sponsorship, then headed up by Greystones man Nigel Northridge.

Eddie loved the sea and sailing -

and spent his final three months in Clifden in Cape Town in his villa overlooking the ocean - a love he carried from his early days on the Bray beachfront.

His autobiography 'An Independent Man' recalls how his love of music also came about from the active band scene in Bray in the 1970s.

Despite not living in Ireland for years he remained Irish to his core and loved nothing more than coming back to Ireland and spending time in the seaside town he adored, Bray.



Best Buds - Bray's Liam Cunningham and Eddie Jordan at Eddie's 70th birthday party.

# Cynthia Ní Mhurchú



## Working for Wicklow in Brussels!

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# Progress made on cliff walk with completion of tenders evaluation process

The tender evaluation process for the Bray to Greystones Cliff walk inspection and report is complete and letters of notification have been issued to tenderers via E-tenders.

An Invitation to tender for Engineering Consultancy Services related to the Bray to Greystones Cliff walk inspection and report were issued via eTenders in Dec 2024 the closing date for receipt of tenders being the 7th of February, 2025.

The assessment will highlight all of the areas of immediate, short and long-term concern. It will also advise as to whether there are any feasible immediate actions that could be undertaken relatively quickly in order to reopen the route to the public such

that it could be deemed safe to do so, or that any such immediate measures would not be realistically feasible given the risks involved.

The project is currently within the mandatory 14-day standstill period and if no queries or observations are received, formal appointment of the preferred tenderer is expected at the end of April/beginning May pending comments or observations which may be received during the standstill period.

Once the consultant is appointed it is intended to

request the Chair of the Committee to convene a meeting of the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk Management Committee and Bray Municipal District will arrange to have the consultants present to advise on the next steps and anticipated timeframe for completion of the work. Funding from the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage has been received for this phase of the project.

Cllr Erika Doyle, Chairperson of the Cliff Walk Committee, said "I'm

delighted to see this progress update from the team as we step closer to the appointment of a contractor for the necessary engineering consultancy services. It has been the number one item on people's agenda for Bray for a number of years now and understandably so. We always knew this would not be a quick fix, and some of the issues at the Greystones end differ from the Bray end. There is still some journey to travel.

"However the proper processes must be adhered to. We have seen at a

national level how the public view opaque procedure and we want to ensure that these vital works are procured correctly. The reopening of the Cliff Walk has been a priority for not only this committee but all the elected members since its closure. As a regular walker of the route I want nothing more than to enjoy the stunning views of from our coastal walk again. We are committed to working towards this goal and keeping the public in the loop on the project as it progresses."



Cllr Erika Doyle.

# Whitmore invites Minister for Biodiversity and Heritage to visit Glen of the Downs



Jennifer Whitmore TD.

*'Time for Government to make good on previous conversations'*

Social Democrat TD Jennifer Whitmore, has formally invited the Minister of State for Biodiversity and Heritage, Minister Christopher O'Sullivan, to visit the Glen of the Downs Nature Reserve in County Wicklow. This invitation underscores the critical need for government support in preserving this ecologically significant area.

"Earlier this week, I invited the Minister to visit the Glen of the Downs to witness firsthand the incredible commitment of the local community to nature conservation. It is vital that the Minister understands the importance of this site, its rich history, and the ongoing efforts by residents to protect and enhance its biodiversity," Deputy Whitmore explained.

The Glen of the Downs,

a 2km long wooded glacial valley, is a designated Nature Reserve and Special Area of Conservation, renowned for its rich biodiversity and ancient woodland. The area is home to a variety of flora and fauna, including rare and threatened species.

Towards the end of 2024, nearly 80 hectares of land adjacent to the Glen of the Downs came up for sale, with 40 hectares

being forest land. Deputy Whitmore started a petition to call on the Government to purchase this land to expand the Glen of the Downs. The petition garnered over 5,000 signatures from the local community and national environmental groups. Deputy Whitmore presented this petition to the last government. She also spoke to the previous Minister about the potential government purchase

of the lands, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service were looking into this last term.

"Considering how far we got in our conversations last term, it is really crucial that Minister O'Sullivan come down to the Glen of the Downs to see the land and really understand the importance of this public purchase. It is imperative that this government follows through on previous discussions to

purchase this land," Deputy Whitmore emphasised.

"I am hopeful that the Minister will accept this invitation and come down to meet with the local community. This visit would provide an invaluable opportunity to discuss the significance of preserving such a vital natural habitat for future generations and the government's central role in this," Deputy Whitmore concluded.



## OPEN DAY

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# Timmins backs call for new health policy

Fine Gael TD Edward Timmins has joined an Oireachtas Heart and Stroke group to back urgent calls for a new national cardiovascular disease (CVD) health policy.

Deputy Timmins has agreed to be an advocate for the thousands of heart disease and stroke patients in his constituency. Ten thousand lives a year are claimed by CVD, Ireland's biggest killer, accounting for almost 30% of all mortality.

In Wicklow, 18,000 people live with the disease, which causes a wide range of heart conditions. Nationally, 80,000 CVD patients are discharged home every year - or one every seven minutes.

But despite the enormous toll of death and infirmity, Ireland has not had a CVD disease policy for over five years. The new group, set up by the Irish Heart Foundation, aims to build consensus across the political spectrum to support these 'abandoned' patients - and

thereby deliver huge reductions in preventable death and disability.

"The absence of a policy framework for the prevention, detection and treatment of CVD, along with services that maximise patients' health and wellbeing in the community, is preventing the development of lifesaving services," said Chris Macey, Director of Advocacy with the charity.

"This is resulting in preventable death, disability and loss of quality of life on a significant scale.

"Cardiovascular care has been operating in a policy vacuum for the last five and a half years since the previous National Cardiovascular Health Policy expired."

Ireland, he said, has the



Edward Timmins TD.

lowest number of cardiologists per capita in the EU and there is a critical need for investment in cardiac imaging, including Echocardiography, Cardiac CT, and Cardiac MRI.

In addition, for those

discharged from hospital, access to cardiac and stroke rehabilitation remains inadequate, they are also struggling due to the high costs associated with having a CVD condition and the widespread absence of psychological support to deal with the trauma of having a stroke, heart attack or other heart disease diagnosis.

As well as the need for the fresh CVD policy, the Irish Heart Foundation is also asking the Oireachtas Heart and Stroke group to support the following: Action to increase awareness, treatment and control of high blood pressure which affects 1.5 million people in Ireland and is the biggest risk factor for heart disease and stroke; Full implementation of

the National Stroke Strategy to ensure stroke survivors are admitted to dedicated stroke units, which reduce death and severe disability; Greater investment in cardiac rehabilitation programmes, which can reduce deaths from heart disease by at least a fifth, but which are understaffed and under-resourced nationwide.

Mr Macey said that for the first time in several years, the Irish Heart Foundation is optimistic about the future prospects of heart patients and stroke survivors.

"The sector is united. It has a vision that can address current deficits and futureproof services for the rapid upsurge in heart disease and stroke due to our expanding and ageing population," he said.



Chris Macey, Director of Advocacy with the Irish Heart Foundation.

"This can deliver big reductions in preventable death and disability, through more cost-effective services, but it can only be achieved if poli-

cymakers make CVD a national health priority in the midst of so many crucial competing needs across our health services and our population."

If you are a TD or Senator and want to join the Oireachtas Heart and Stroke group, please contact Pauline O'Shea at poshea@irishheart.ie.



## Mental Health Ireland invites Wicklow to ask Hello, How Are You? on May 15th

For a nation of great talkers, how do we really ask and really listen? Mental Health Ireland invites County Wicklow to ask Hello, How Are You? on Thursday May 15th.

Now in its fourth year, the national Hello, How Are You? campaign highlights the importance of staying connected, helps tackle loneliness, creates a sense of belonging and builds relationships. It also encourages early help-seeking through reliable information on mental health support services and signposting.

There are many ways to slow down and genuinely engage with a family member, friend or even a stranger. You don't need to be an expert to have a meaningful conversation. By using the HELLO Steps you can feel supported in asking the question. Let's make saying Hello and asking How Are You? an everyday question that keeps us connected.

- H: Say Hello?
- E: Engage with the person?
- L: Listen to them?
- L: Learn about them and what they might be saying?
- O: Give them time to talk and to explore options?

For free Hello resources, toolkits and all the information you need in different languages, visit [www.hellohowareyou.info/resources](http://www.hellohowareyou.info/resources)

On Thursday, May 15th there will be Hello, How Are You? events and volunteers all over the country. From coffee mornings to fundraising challenges, there's lots of ways for communities, schools and workplaces to get involved with the campaign this year. It all starts with a simple question, 'How Are You?'

Mental Health Ireland is teaming up with companies, organisations and

groups to ensure that the message of Hello, How Are You? reaches every community and household in Ireland.

Irish Rail is supporting the mental health campaign again with Hello champions and volunteers at Waterford Train Station as well as Dublin Heuston, Dublin Connolly, Limerick, Cork (Ceannt) and Athlone stations on May 15th.

Parkrun, the free, weekly, community event where people of all ages and abilities are welcome to walk, jog, run, or volunteer, is inviting participants across Ireland to learn about the campaign and the benefits of community connections and conversation at parkrun events on Saturday 17 May.

Claire Flynn, national campaign lead said: "Since the first national campaign in 2022, the impact of Hello, How Are You? continues to grow and every year we're seeing more meaningful conversations and social connections being made across Ireland. We continue to develop free literature, resources and training to grow the reach of the campaign and support events, and to work collaboratively with other organisations who are connecting communities in creative and impactful ways.

"On May 15th, we're looking forward to seeing all the different ways the nation says Hello, How Are You? whether it is holding an event, joining a parkrun, or simply boiling the kettle and sitting down with a friend. It all starts with a simple question 'How Are You?'"

## Over €10m investment in Wicklow's Healthcare infrastructure

Tánaiste Simon Harris TD recently announced a major investment of €10.13 million for healthcare projects across County Wicklow, as part of the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Capital Plan for 2025.



Tánaiste Simon Harris TD.

This is part of a record-breaking billion-euro investment in national funding for healthcare infrastructure development. The funding will support a range of significant local projects, including:

- The construction of six new en-suite bedrooms at Baltinglass Community Hospital
- Restoration and enhancement works at Newcastle Hospital
- A new Community Nursing Unit for St. Colman's, Rathdrum
- Procurement of a new site for Greystones Primary Care Centre

Welcoming the announcement, the Tánaiste said: "This is a landmark day for healthcare in Wicklow. I am thrilled to confirm more than €10 million in funding, which will directly benefit patients, families, and healthcare workers across our county.

"Our hospitals and primary care centres are the backbone of healthy communities, and it is vital that these are funded properly.

"In Wicklow, this announcement means direct funding for Baltinglass Community hospital, in which six new en-suite bedrooms will be constructed as well as the procurement of a new site for Greystones PCC, restoration works to Newcastle Hospital and a new Community Nursing Unit for St. Coleman's Rathdrum.

"These projects will greatly help in allowing our healthcare services to better meet the needs of patients and families across Wicklow. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this plan will have for communities across our county."

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# Early morning count aims to support Bray rough sleepers

Bray Homeless Forum (BHF) carried out a comprehensive count of rough sleepers in Bray in the early hours of Friday April 11th, with the aim of better understanding local needs and informing the development of future homelessness services in the area.

The initiative, which involved mapping the town and deploying foot teams across designated sections, brought together representatives and volunteers from statutory, community and voluntary sectors. The count provides a vital snapshot of homelessness in Bray, which will be used to track trends, assess the impact of current interventions, and ensure that resources are targeted effectively.

Over the years, counts such as this have played a key role in helping BHF and its partners identify emerging issues, improve

collaboration, and advocate for improved housing solutions. By gathering detailed, up-to-date information on rough sleeping in the town, the Forum can continue to shape responses that are both evidence-based and person-centred.

As part of the outreach, volunteers distributed packs containing essential items along with pocket-sized info cards with contact details of local homeless and support services. This practical support ensures that those encountered during the count are not only acknowledged, but connected to

the help that is available.

Bray Homeless Forum wishes to extend its sincere thanks to all who participated in this coordinated effort, with particular thanks to Brian Wildes of Wicklow County Council for his meticulous planning and Sergeant Carrick and her team for their support on the ground.

The Forum plans to conduct regular counts throughout the year to monitor patterns in rough sleeping and respond swiftly to emerging needs. More info on BHF at [bnwap.ie](http://bnwap.ie)



Members of the Bray Homeless Forum.



Pictured are Jason Doyle and Joanne Murray who were wed last Thursday in Kimacanoge Church.

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# Sinn Féin holds Easter Commemoration in Bray

## *A call to honour the past by building a just and united future*

Wicklow Sinn Féin held its annual Easter 1916 Commemoration in Bray on Easter Monday, with a large crowd gathering to honour the men and women who gave everything in the cause of Irish freedom. The event included a reading of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, a wreath-laying ceremony to honour our patriot dead, and a powerful oration delivered by Councillor Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien.



Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien speaking at the Commemoration.

Speaking after the event, Wicklow Sinn Féin TD John Brady said: "Easter is a time of remembrance, but it is also a time of recommitment. It is a moment to reflect on the ideals that were so clearly laid out in the 1916 Proclamation - ideals of sovereignty, equality, and justice - and to rededicate ourselves to finishing the unfinished business of 1916. That means building a true Republic - one that cherishes all the children of the nation equally."

Deputy Brady continued: "Our goal remains clear: to see a United Ireland take its rightful place amongst the nations of the world - a nation rooted in the values of the Irish people. A nation that rejects the imperialist mantra that might is right, that stands firmly against war and oppression, and upholds international justice and peace. As James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army declared: 'We serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland.' That remains our guiding principle."

"Today, Ireland's military neutrality - a cornerstone of our foreign policy and a moral stance we can be proud of - is under sustained attack from Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. Sinn Féin will oppose any attempt to dismantle this cherished principle. If the government believes the people support their plans, let them put it to a vote. The Irish people will give them their answer."

Deputy Brady concluded: "This Easter, we remember. But more importantly, we act. We stand together to honour the past, to confront the injustices of the present, and to build a better, fairer, united Ireland - a true Republic that lives up to the vision proclaimed in 1916 and which takes its place in the world as a beacon of justice, peace, and equality."

In his speech at the Commemoration Bray MD Cathaoirleach, Sinn Féin Cllr Dermot 'Daisy' O'Brien reminded those in attendance that 109 years later the Proclamation of the Republic is still the Mission Statement, a moral compass, and a call to action in defiance of oppression.

Cllr O'Brien told the



Deputy John Brady marching in the 1916 commemoration on Bray Main Street.

crowd that "change is happening. Across the island, a new Ireland is being born. We are in the end days of partition and the Irish people demand the chance to shape

their future."

He called on the Government to establish a Citizens Assembly on Irish Unity and to prepare for a referendum to allow the will of the people to shape Ireland's future.

"A new and united Ireland is not a dream; it's a destination and we are on our way there."

Cllr O'Brien also criti-

cised the dismantling of the Triple Lock and called for the continued support for Palestine "because our history demands it, and our humanity insists on it."

## Commemorative ceremony held at Kilmacanogue 1916 Garden



L-R Cllr Joe Behan, Tony Lawlor and Deputy John Brady pictured after the ceremony.

A small commemorative ceremony marking the anniversary of the 1916 Rising took place on Easter Sunday morning in the Kilmacanogue 1916 Garden.

The event was chaired by Tony Lawlor and had reading of the 1916 Proclamation by Jason Doyle, followed by a wreath laying by Mary Lawlor.

Now in its ninth year, the 1916 Garden has become a treasured part of the village. To honour the memory of the executed leaders, the Irish flag will fly at half-mast on each of their anniversary dates.

The committee would also like to extend its appreciation to all who help maintain the Garden, with special recognition to Paddy Connolly for his ongoing commitment and weekly upkeep.

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# 21 Air Ambulance missions carried out in Wicklow in 2024

Tánaiste and Minister for Defence Simon Harris TD has praised the lifesaving work of Ireland's Emergency Aeromedical Service (EAS), which completed 21 missions in County Wicklow in 2024.

The EAS, often referred to as the Air Ambulance, plays a vital role in responding to critical incidents across the country.

These missions often involve severe trauma from falls, road traffic collisions, and other urgent medical emergencies.

The service provides rapid air transport for

patients of all ages often to Dublin's major trauma centres and specialist hospitals, including Beaumont, Tallaght, and CHI Crumlin.

With a total of 652 mis-

sions nationwide last year, the EAS continues to demonstrate its essential, all-island reach.

The county-by-county breakdown highlights Wicklow's share of these interventions, showcasing the service's impact locally as well as nationally.

The Tánaiste said: "I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the extraordinary team behind our air ambulance service. Their work makes a real difference to communities across the country, including here in Wicklow."

"These figures highlight the critical role the EAS plays in providing fast, expert medical care, particularly in remote or hard-to-reach areas."

"It's a service that quite literally saves lives, ensuring that some of our most seriously ill or injured patients receive emergency

care when every second counts. Operating 365 days a year, this service is a gamechanger for both rural and urban Ireland. The impact it has had and continues to have on families across the country cannot be overstated."

"As Tánaiste and Minister for Defence, I'm incredibly proud of this service and deeply committed to ensuring it remains properly funded, fully resourced, and supported into the future. It is nothing less than essential."



Tánaiste Simon Harris TD meeting with Ireland's Emergency Aeromedical Service members.

## Wicklow RNLI brings three people to safety after yacht gets into difficulty

Wicklow RNLI brought three people to safety on the evening of Monday 21st April after their vessel developed mechanical problems four miles south of Wicklow Harbour.

The all-weather lifeboat RNLB Bridie O'Shea slipped its mooring at 8:50pm to reports of a yacht with three persons on board which had developed electrical issues leading to engine failure.

The volunteer lifeboat crew under the command of Coxswain Nicky Keogh located the vessel approximately 20 minutes after launching in a position four miles south of Wicklow Harbour. Conditions on scene were calm wind, with calm seas and good visibility.

Once on scene, the volunteer crew assessed the situation. Given the fact that the yacht was unable to make safe progress without any wind and without any means of propulsion, a decision was made to establish a tow. The yacht was towed by the lifeboat to the

nearest safe location which was Wicklow harbour.

The vessel was secured alongside a short time later and all 3 casualties were assessed as being ok with no further attention required.

Speaking after the callout Deputy LPO Connie O'Gara said "This was a quick response by the crew and that along with their training helped bring three people safely ashore and we wish them well."

"As we approach summer, we would like to remind people planning a trip at sea to ensure they have a suitable means of communication to be able to call for help should the need arise. Let someone know where you are going and when you are due back and if you get into trouble or see anyone in difficulty, dial 112 or 999 and ask for the Coast Guard."



Wicklow All Weather Lifeboat responding to the callout. Photo courtesy of Wicklow RNLI.



## 2025 Greystones Municipal District / Wicklow Times People of the Year Awards



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# 'A special milestone for an amazing service'

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore recently joined the team at Cali (Care and Learn Ireland) in Newtownmountkennedy to mark a very special milestone - the first birthday of the innovative Learning Day Service for young people with severe to profound intellectual disabilities.



Hannah Doonan, Abbey Ramsey and Orla O'Farrell celebrating the first anniversary of Cali at the Newtownmountkennedy Community Centre.

"I was delighted to join the team at Cali and congratulate them on a successful first year. It was a really enjoyable celebration and a great opportunity to see first-hand the incredible work being done," Deputy Whitmore commented.

Deputy Whitmore met with Cali's Director Annette Kinne and Manager Kristin Keogh to celebrate the achievements of the past year and to show her support for the important role Cali plays in the community. The service provides further education alongside care and therapy supports for individuals who often face a gap in services after exiting schools like St. Catherine's Special School.

"This service is so important. It provides a vital bridge for young people with severe to profound intellectual disabilities who often find themselves without options once they leave school. Cali is addressing that gap in such a caring, professional, and innovative way," Deputy Whitmore continued.



Annette Kinne, Kristin Keogh and Jennifer Whitmore TD celebrating the first anniversary of Cali at the Newtownmountkennedy Community Centre.

"The success of Cali highlights the strength of community and collaboration," Deputy Whitmore emphasised. "Since opening its doors in April 2024, Cali has proved itself a crucial resource to

the community, and has empowered the adults who attend the classes by helping them enhance their skills, gain more independence, and improve their ability to express themselves,"

Deputy Whitmore added. "Services like Cali are essential in creating a more inclusive and supportive Wicklow. It's inspiring to see this level of dedication and innovation right here in our com-

munity, and I look forward to seeing Cali grow in the years ahead. I'd like to thank and congratulate everyone who has made this service the success that it is," Deputy Whitmore concluded.

## Bray Soroptimists present cheques to chosen charities

Soroptimist International Bray & District held their Annual Presentation of Cheques to their chosen charities for 2024-25 in Purple House, Bray, on Monday 14th April.

The recipients were: Purple House Cancer Support €500; Bray Women's Refuge €500; SIGBI Benevolent Fund €200; Bray Area Rough Sleepers (BARSS) €200; Marino Community Special School €250; Malawi Girls Education Fund €700; Five Loaves Bray €500; Loreto School Rumbek, South Sudan €200. President Ann Broekhoven congratulated them all on their amazing contribution to their local communities, and wished them every success in the future.

"In addition, we are also delighted to announce our new 'Brand Ambassador' for Soroptimist International Republic of Ireland, Louise Duffy from RTE Radio One."



Louise Duffy (Broadcaster, RTE Radio 1), President Anne O'Sullivan, Soroptimist International Republic of Ireland, and members of Soroptimist International Bray & District.

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# €357,499 awarded to protect archaeological monuments

Four Wicklow projects will be awarded €357,499 in funding under the 2025 Community Monuments Fund. These grants help owners and custodians of archaeological monuments to safeguard them into the future.



Tánaiste Simon Harris.

The announcement comes as part of nationwide funding under the CMF which totals at €7.4 million. This fund is aimed at investing in Archaeological Heritage across the country and will help the owners and custodians of archaeological monuments to safeguard them into the

future for the benefit of communities and visitors.

The Wicklow projects to receive funding will be Drumgoff Barracks €130,000.00; Newcastle Castle €130,000.00; Mullinacuff; €67,499.25; Kilmacanogue Church €30,000.00.

The Community Monuments Fund supports a range of initiatives to conserve, maintain, protect and promote local monuments and historic sites. This investment safeguards monuments for the benefit of communities and the public. It does so by enabling conservation works and repairs as well as building resilience through protecting monuments from the effects of extreme weather and climate change. The scheme also encourages public



Cllr Stephen Stokes.

access and improvements to the presentation of local monuments.

In a statement the Tánaiste Simon Harris said: "I am delighted today to be able to

announce over €350,000 in funding for archaeological monuments across County Wicklow. This funding is a real game-changer for ensuring that our rich history

and heritage is preserved and safeguarded for visitors and communities far into the future. Overall, the funding will contribute to the maintenance of a total of four projects across Wicklow.

The Tánaiste added: "I want to thank the custodians of these archaeological sites for their commitment to protecting our history; I know that this announcement will be hugely welcome news. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for their work in getting this over the line."

Cllr Stephen Stokes has welcomed the allocation of €130,000 in funding for the conservation and enhancement of Newcastle Castle.



An allocation of €130,000 will ensure essential works can take place at Newcastle Castle.

The historic Newcastle Castle, a landmark of Wicklow's heritage, will benefit from critical conservation works designed to safeguard the structure for future generations. The funding, confirmed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, is part of the commitment to protecting Ireland's archaeological heritage.

Speaking about the announcement, Cllr

Stokes stated: "This is good news for Newcastle and a proud day for everyone who values our local heritage. Newcastle Castle is not only an important part of the village's identity, but a living connection to our shared history. The allocation of €130,000 will ensure essential works can take place."

Cllr Stephen Stokes also acknowledged the efforts of Wicklow County Council and the Heritage Office for their role in

securing local monuments. He added: "I want to thank the dedicated teams who put together the conservation plans and funding application. Their work is vital in ensuring Newcastle Castle stands strong for future generations. The Community Monuments Fund plays a key role in maintaining the integrity of heritage sites like this, and today's announcement is a real vote of confidence in the project."

## Health check for Kilcoole Town Centre

Wicklow County Council, in partnership with Queen's University Belfast, hosted a drop-in information session at the Kilcoole Community Centre on Tuesday, April 15th.

Cllr Stephen Stokes has welcomed the ongoing efforts to shape a vibrant and sustainable future for Kilcoole following his attendance at the Kilcoole Town Centre Health Check and Town Team information event.

The event, which was well attended by local residents and community representatives, focused on the vitality of Kilcoole's town centre. The findings will help guide future planning and investment, ensuring Kilcoole continues to grow in a way that supports both local needs and environmental priorities. In addition to the health check survey, the event introduced the "Town Team" concept, which encourages local stakeholders to work together to develop a shared vision for the area and play an active role in its development.

Speaking after the event, Cllr Stephen Stokes stated: "It's fantastic to see the people of Kilcoole coming together to plan for the future of the town. The Town Centre Health Check gives us real data and insight into what's working well and where we need to focus attention."

This consultation aims to identify the town's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, focusing on aspects such as local businesses, infras-

structure, public spaces, community facilities, and accessibility. The findings from this session will help inform future regeneration efforts and guide the Town Centre First initiative. Cllr Stokes also highlighted the importance of continued community engagement, stressing that successful regeneration and planning require local knowledge, collaboration, and ambition. In advance of the information session over 60 submissions were made online.

Wicklow County Council will seek establish a Town Centre First Team in 2025, as part of the National Town Centre First policy. This team, supported by the Town Regeneration Officer (TRO), will be essential in delivering a Town Centre First strategy and vision for Kilcoole. Town Teams typically consist of representatives from businesses, community groups, residents, tourism organizations, An Garda Síochána, charities, social enterprises, sports organizations, cultural groups, voluntary groups, chambers of commerce, retailers, developers, and educational institutions. The policy recognises the uniqueness of each town and emphasizes the importance of having a team that reflects the community.

For any further information, please email townregeneration@wicklowcoco.ie



Cllr Stephen Stokes and Cllr Tom Fortune at the Kilcoole Town Centre Health Check.

## Greystones Coast Guard Station 'plagued by delays'



Deputy John Brady at the site for the Coast Guard in Greystones Harbour.

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has voiced serious concern over what he describes as the complete mismanagement of public funds in relation to the long-delayed Greystones Coast Guard Station project at Greystones Harbour.

Figures that Deputy Brady received from the Department of Transport show that the Office of Public Works (OPW) has spent €302,241.15 on the project to date, despite not a sod being turned on site.

Commenting on the situation, Deputy Brady said: "Since planning permission was first granted by Wicklow County Council in 2020, the Greystones Coast Guard Station project has been plagued by a litany of delays. These include a complete redesign midway through the process, the need to submit fresh planning applications, and repeated setbacks that have caused mounting frustration both among Coast Guard personnel and the wider community.

"Now, nearly five years later, we have yet to see any construction begin. I have received a breakdown of the project's costs from the Fianna Fáil Minister, and I am frankly dismayed to learn that over

€302,241.15 has already been spent - despite not a single sod being turned on-site. This level of expenditure, with no physical progress to show for it, is deeply alarming and raises serious questions about the oversight and management by the Department of Transport and the Office of Public Works (OPW).

"The Coast Guard Station is not a luxury - it is an essential piece of infrastructure that plays a critical role in protecting the lives of those along our coastline. The prolonged delays are putting both Coast Guard personnel and the local community at risk. At present, the Greystones unit remains stationed in a premises that is wholly unfit for purpose, while this cumbersome and costly process drags on.

"The tendering process is now finally nearing its conclusion. The OPW is expected to submit a tender assessment report and rec-

ommendation to the Department of Transport by the end of April 2025, with a view to awarding the construction contract shortly thereafter. Construction costs are estimated to be in the region of Á6million. However, given the protracted timeline, excessive spending, and the repeated obstacles faced, confidence in the OPW - both nationally and certainly here in Wicklow - has been severely undermined.

"I will continue to hold both the Department of Transport and the OPW to account, to ensure that this project is moved swiftly to the construction phase. I will also be scrutinising all future expenditure to safeguard taxpayer money and will follow up directly with the Minister's department to demand transparency and accountability. This project has dragged on for far too long. The Coast Guard, and the people of Greystones, deserve better."



# Young people from Wicklow announced as Local Champions by the National Youth Council of Ireland

*NYCI launches Local Champions initiative to advocate for increased investment in young people and youth work*

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), which represents organisations working with young people nationwide, has launched its Local Champions initiative for 2025. The campaign aims to ensure increased investment in young people and youth work locally and nationally. Aldrin Omana, Anna Kenny from Arklow. Jason Broe, Louisa Tyrrell, Némhain Ní Chonchobhair from Kilcoole and Oscar O Broin from Greystones, have been selected as Local Champions for Wicklow.

Grace McManus, NYCI campaigns manager explained: "As part of the Local Champions project, a group of passionate and dedicated young people have been selected as representatives from their communities, tasked with meeting their local politicians and championing the cause of youth work."

The Local Champions received training and support from NYCI to effectively convey the positive impact youth work has on their lives and the lives of young people in the local area, as well as the importance of investing in youth work. NYCI is calling for an increased investment of €21 million in youth work in Budget 2026, to support services with increasing pressures, and ensure equal access to youth work for all young people nationwide.

The representatives Local Champions in Wicklow are engaging with TDs John Brady, Simon Harris, Edward Timmins and Jennifer Whitmore.

Jason said: "I'm really looking forward to meeting with our local

politicians, sharing with them my positive experience of being on the receiving end of youth services. I believe that there's lots of hard work happening in our local area, and that our community's future depends on the quality of supports for the youth and should get its fair share come budget time."

Louisa said: "I am delighted to have been selected as a Local Champion this year! The positive impact that involvement in youth work and activism has had on my life has been nothing short of incredible, particularly with organisations such as Comhairle na nOg, Scouting Ireland, the Irish Girl Guides and the ISSU (Irish Second-level Students Union). I am really looking forward to advocating for other young people to have access to the same opportunities as I have and hopefully even more. I believe this project is hugely important nationwide and particularly here in Cill Mhantain as we unfortunately don't have as many youth work opportunities as other counties around the country might. I will be meeting with local

decision makers over the next year in order to show them just how crucial youth work is to young people's growth and personal development, mental health, community involvement and their active citizenship. I am very optimistic about this project and I hope that it will lead to youth work being given more of the support, respect and especially funding it deserves, both in our community and across Ireland."

Aldrin said "I can't wait to meet our local politicians to talk to them about the very positive experiences I've had with Cross Care. There is extremely good work being done in my local area to help support young people, and I feel it's important to let these politicians know about the strong impact it has. Youth work is essential everywhere, and it should be accommodated for with sufficient funding so that it can run effectively."

The Local Champions initiative will include activities such as engaging with policymakers, sharing personal stories, and using social media to raise awareness



The National Youth Council of Ireland.

and mobilise support.

Through these efforts, NYCI and the Local Champions aim to create a broader understanding of the significance of youth work and its positive impact on society.

The initiative is part of NYCI's campaign ahead of Budget 2026 later this year, to ensure that young people and youth work receive the necessary investment and support they deserve.

The Local Champions initiative is supported by the Community Foundation Ireland.

Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of Community Foundation Ireland added: "Empowering Generations is central to our mission as a philanthropic hub for Ireland. To achieve that goal we're delighted to be partners with NYCI. The Local Champions network aims to amplify the voices of young people and

showcase the transformative power of youth work. It is bringing together an inspirational group of young people, and we look forward to seeing them connecting with their local representatives to share how youth work changes lives."

To learn more about the Local Champions Initiative and NYCI's efforts to advocate for increased investment in youth work, please visit [youth.ie](http://youth.ie).

## Major improvements for teachers and students

Tánaiste Simon Harris has welcomed important changes announced by Fine Gael's Minister for Education Helen McEntee.

Under the new measures, teachers who are hired from September will now be eligible for permanent contracts after just one year of service.

This move is designed to improve job security and retain talent within the Irish education system. Students will also benefit from Minister McEntee's announce-

ment, as changes to the grading system will see the bands for Junior Cert make more people eligible for top grades.

The Tánaiste said: "These are common sense proposals from Helen McEntee to help retain teachers here in Ireland. For students preparing for the Junior Cert, there is good news too. The grade bands at Junior Cycle will be amended."

"With the top four grade band now becoming evenly distributed, this will have a positive impact on students, ensuring their grades are more reflective of their work and effort, as well as of the work of our teachers."

"Fine Gael believes in equality of opportunity and ensuring every person can reach their full potential. These changes will help us achieve that goal."

The announcement builds on further progress in recent days, including a new initiative secured by Ministers Helen McEntee and Hildegard Naughton to deliver key therapeutic supports in special schools. This will see speech and language therapists and occupational therapists deployed directly into special education settings, helping children with additional needs reach their full potential.

The Tánaiste added: "Providing some level of speech and language therapy and occupational therapy to each special school is essential to help students reach their full potential. The focus will initially be on introducing speech and language therapy and occupational therapy into special education schools. Over time we will see an expansion of other services, like physiotherapy. This was a key commitment during the general election for Fine Gael."



Tánaiste Simon Harris with Minister for Education Helen McEntee.

## Funding for St Patrick's Loreto

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore, has welcomed the news that St Patrick's Loreto Primary School in Bray has received funding to modernise the school's electrical systems. After working closely with the school to secure this funding, Deputy Whitmore is very pleased with this outcome.

"I am thrilled that we have secured the necessary funding to modernise the electrical systems at St Patrick's Loreto Primary School," Deputy Whitmore stated. "This has been a critical issue for the school, and I am happy to have played a part in ensuring the safety and well-being of the students and staff. This funding will address critical electrical works identified in a recent Periodic Inspection Report, which raised serious concerns about the school's electrical systems," Deputy Whitmore explained.

"I am relieved that the work will be completed before the 2025/26 academic year begins," Deputy Whitmore continued. "It is, however, unacceptable that schools have to fight for funding to address such fundamental issues. The safety of our children and school staff is paramount."

Deputy Whitmore worked closely with Principal Anne-Marie McGovern to ensure this

funding was delivered and to prevent disruption from these unexpected required works.

"I want to thank everyone involved for their hard work and dedication

to securing this funding. It is a great example of what we can achieve when we work together for the benefit of our community," Deputy Whitmore concluded.



Deputy Whitmore.



# Deadline approaching for Coillte's 2025 Forestry Scholarship

Coillte, Ireland's semi-state forestry company, is encouraging prospective students interested in a career in forestry to apply for its 2025 Forestry Scholarship Award ahead of the 2nd May deadline for applications.



Inaugural scholars Aine O'Dwyer (Donegal), Mia Sibbald (Kildare) and Alex Power (Waterford). Pic: Naoise Culhane.

The scholarship, which is open to Leaving Certificate or mature students who are planning to enrol in one of the eligible forestry third level undergraduate courses, sees up to €5,000 being offered per recipient, per year of their degree.

Building on the success of its inaugural programme, which saw scholarships being awarded to three students, the scholarship provides substantial financial and career support for those, pursuing a full-time, third level forestry programme at University College Dublin (UCD) or South East Technological University (SETU). Alongside the financial contribution, recipients of this scholarship will also benefit from paid summer placements and potential career opportunities with Coillte.

Speaking about the scholarship's impact, inaugural scholar, Alex Power, said: "Receiving the Coillte scholarship has opened doors for me. It's not just the financial support - it's being part of a sector that plays such an important role in tackling climate change and supporting rural communities."

Applications for the 2025 Coillte Forestry Scholarship Programme are closing Friday 2nd May 2025, for more information visit [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie).



BIFE Principal Ray Tedders presents an award to the winner of the European gold medal for Culinary Arts. Pictured with him are Conor Bradshaw, Morgan McGinty, Deacon Greene, and Willie Rochford, teacher, and Louise Fortune, Deputy Principal.

## ECO-UNESCO celebrates Earth Day by highlighting Wicklow finalists for Young Environmentalist Awards

Young climate activists from Greystones Community College are among the all-island finalists selected to go through to this year's ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA), taking place on 8th May in the Convention Centre Dublin.

ECO-UNESCO spotlighted the YEA 2025 finalists to coincide with Earth Day which takes place every year on 22nd April as part of Earth Month.

The group from Greystones Community College are among 102 finalists from across the island of Ireland to have succeeded at the semi-final 'ECO-Dens' stages of the YEAs last month and who will now go on to showcase their short-listed eco-projects at the awards' finals this May.

Their 'What a Waste!' project focuses on raising awareness about waste management and encouraging better waste disposal practices and it has made it through to the Waste Category of the awards. The project addresses the issue of incorrect waste sorting and aims to engage students in finding solutions. They created a website, designed lessons for first and second year students, held assemblies, and organised a fundraising day to raise awareness about the impact of waste at school, local, national, and global levels.

The young people from Co Wicklow will join over 1,000 young environmentalists from across Ireland for a day of celebration, inspiration, and climate action at the Young Environmentalist Awards.

ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards is an all-island programme that recognises the work of young people who are tackling key issues in relation to climate and biodiversity loss, taking environmental action in their school or community and coming up with creative solutions to solve environmental issues. Now in its 26th year, the YEA programme has reached people in every county of Ireland, with a total of over 65,000 young people participating and 6,000 projects entered down through the years.

Commenting on this year's YEA finalists, Elaine Nevin, National Director, ECO-UNESCO said: "The projects that have made it through to this year's Young Environmentalist Awards reflect the mission of Earth Day, the theme of which this year is 'Our Power, Our Planet'?

a call to action highlighting the transformative power of young people and their role in creating a more sustainable and equitable future. Earth Day 2025 encourages individuals, communities, and governments to take action by adopting renewable energy solutions, advocating for supportive policies, and participating in local and global initiatives. Through their projects, young people have taken the lead in raising awareness of critical environmental issues, inspiring change in their communities, and championing more sustainable lifestyles.

Planet'? a call to action highlighting the transformative power of young people and their role in creating a more sustainable and equitable future. Earth Day 2025 encourages individuals, communities, and governments to take action by adopting renewable energy solutions, advocating for supportive policies, and participating in local and global initiatives. Through their projects, young people have taken the lead in raising awareness of critical environmental issues, inspiring change in their communities, and championing more sustainable lifestyles.

## Wicklow schools to benefit from hot school meals expansion

Tánaiste Simon Harris has announced that schools across County Wicklow are to benefit from a further expansion of the Hot School Meals Programme. The allocation of additional schools is in part of a major expansion of the Hot School Meals Programme announced by the Government, spearheaded by Simon Harris.

The Tánaiste said: "I am extremely proud of the Hot School Meals Programme and the positive impact it has had in schools right across the country. Since its establishment in 2019, hundreds of thousands of children have benefitted from a hot dinner in the middle of the day. A hot school meal does wonders for our children in terms of their physical and mental health, as well as their educational output.

"It makes them happier and more productive, while also giving parents peace of mind that their children are being fed while at school. I'm therefore really pleased to see that today, the Hot School Meal Programme is being expanded once again.

"This is a programme that was set up by Fine Gael as a pilot programme and it has gone from strength to strength over the years. I look forward to working with the successful school in rolling out this scheme for the benefit of their students."



Tánaiste Simon Harris TD.



Rosie Callaghan.  
AdvDip Hyp, HDip Ed



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Niamh Beatrix.

# Wicklow teen set to release powerful new original single

*Niamh Beatrix to release 'The Swallow' on May 2nd*

Releasing on May 2nd, *The Swallow* is the much-anticipated original single from Wicklow's own Niamh Beatrix, the 14-year-old singer-songwriter already making waves with her soulful voice and astonishing emotional depth.

Lovingly referred to by some media outlets as the 'Little Adele,' Niamh brings maturity far beyond her years to *The Swallow* - a deeply introspective track exploring themes of change, letting go, and the quiet courage found in life's in-between moments.

The song had its first live performance at the EastCoastFM Coffee Morning, where Niamh made history as both the youngest and the only child ever invited to perform at the prestigious event. Her performance left a lasting impression, with audience members describing the moment as 'chilling', 'beautiful', and 'beyond her years'.

"This is not just another teen with a guitar," said one listener. "The Swallow is a powerful, emotional piece by a very emotionally intelligent young artist. There's something real and rare here."

In a world where many young people struggle to find their voice, Niamh Beatrix is bravely making hers heard - with authenticity, vulnerability, and grace.

Support Niamh's journey by following her on Spotify and @NiamhBeatrix on social media. The Swallow will be available to stream worldwide on May 2nd.

# Nduduzo Makhathini Trio at Whale Theatre

*Saturday 3rd 2nd May 8pm (doors 7pm) Tickets €25 and available at [www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie) or call the booking office on 01 2010550.*

Pianist Nduduzo Makhathini has been a central figure in South Africa's vibrant jazz scene for over a decade.

One of just a handful of African-based musicians to be signed to the prestigious Blue Note jazz label, he has released three albums on Blue Note, including *Modes of*

Communication: Letters From the Underworlds, which earned a New York Times 'Best Album of the Year' ranking in 2020.

Makhathini is no ordinary jazz pianist. Rather,

he's a warm, engaging performer who is also a healer, shaman and educator who has delved deep into the history and traditions of his ancestors for inspiration.

A charismatic live performer, his concerts are absorbing, his tunes a rich tapestry that can be sim-

ple, sparse and lyrical, or dense and hypnotic. Makhathini imbues his music with distinctive cultural references - Zulu language recitations, trills, treble fill-ins, intimate microphone murmurs and passages studded with impressive tongue-click consonants of the Khoisan

languages of his homeland.

Makhathini is joined in his stellar trio by South African double-bassist Zwelakhe Bell le Pere and Cuban drummer Lukmil Perez, musicians with whom he appears to have a near telepathic understanding.



# Xhosa Cole at Whale Theatre

*Friday 2nd May, 8pm (doors 7pm) Tickets €25 and available at [www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie) or call the booking office on 01 2010550.*

Saxophonist Xhosa Cole has been blazing a trail since he first emerged on the UK jazz scene as the winner of the BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year award, in 2018.

A year later he collected the 'best new-comer' prize at the prestigious Parliamentary Jazz Awards, and was named Breakthrough Act of the Year by Jazz FM in the UK.

Now aged 28, Xhosa Cole is from Handsworth, and follows in the illustrious footsteps of such great contemporary saxophonists from Birmingham, including Soweto Kinch and Sons of Kemit frontman, Shabaka Hutchings.

His recently released third album 'On a Modern Genius Vol. 1', which explores and collages the compositions of pianist Thelonious Monk compositions, breathing new life into timeless tunes, was named 'Album of the Month' by The Guardian, in February of this year. It was also 'Editor's Choice' of the UK's leading jazz magazine, *Jazzwise*, a month later.

Xhosa has performed twice at the BBC Proms, composed music for the Rhipieno Players, a Birmingham Based String Orchestra, recorded saxophone for Mahalia's debut album *Love and Compromise*, completed a 22 date UK tour, all while he studied at the the UK's Trinity Laban Conservatoire.



# Poetry Day Ireland: Bealtaine Poem Circles

*Whale Theatre, Thursday 1st May 8pm (doors 7pm) Tickets €18/€15 and available at [www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie) or call the booking office on 01 2010550*



An evening of poetry and song to celebrate May Day for Poetry Day Ireland 2025. We will also acknowledge the Celtic festival of Bealtaine, which took place in prehistoric stone circles.

These spiritual sites, where bonfires were kindled to welcome the arrival of summer, were believed to have healing properties.

More recently, May Day united workers of the world to campaign for their rights. All of these themes will be reflected in poems and songs to nourish the soul, and a finale of sound bath therapy to soothe the heart and mind.

Come and join guest poets: Frances Browner, Eithne Hand, Sian Quill, Deirdre McKernan Crosby, and Marc Diamond; musicians: Brian Whelan, John Hutchings, Liam Ruth, and poet/sound therapy practitioner, Layla Moroney, who blends the healing power of sound meditation with the artistry of poetry.

Thursday 1st May  
8pm (doors 7pm)  
Tickets: €18/€15  
[www.whaletheatre.ie](http://www.whaletheatre.ie)



# Poems, Stones, and Circles

1st May, Sunrise Event at 5:50am; & Evening Event at 8pm. The Cove and The Whale Theatre, Greystones. Tickets: Sunrise Swim & Readings: Free; Evening Poetry Performance: €18/€15

Poetry Ireland is delighted to announce the recipients of the Bright Ideas bursary for Poetry Day Ireland 2025, the all-island celebration of poetry taking place on Thursday May 1st.

Two Greystones events book-ending Poetry Day Ireland on Thursday May 1st. Start Poetry Day Ireland with a sunrise swim at The Cove in Greystones followed by readings on the beach. In the evening head to The Whale Theatre in Greystones for an night of poetry and song to celebrate May Day.

Celebrating the theme 'May Day', this year's programme brings together poets, communities, artists, and activists in a vibrant celebration of creativity, renewal, and connection across the island.

The Bright Ideas Bursary supports imaginative, community-focused events that explore poetry in original and unexpected ways. From Butter inspired writing workshops in Cork to immersive interdisciplinary

exhibitions in Belfast, storytelling circles in Dingle and Greystones to gatherings

combining art and activism in Kilkenny, a total of 14 projects received Bright Ideas bursaries to help bring their vision to life for Poetry Day Poetry Ireland is also excited to launch the full Poetry Day Ireland 2025 programme, now available at poetryday.ie.

## Sunrise Swim and Stone Circle

Join the Happy Pear and Swimrise swimmers for Sunrise on May Day (5:50am), meeting down at The Cove in Greystones. Take a stone with a line from a poem into the sea, bring a poem or two that you like, or have written, and join in forming our own stone circle to read poetry after the swim.

All environmentally friendly products provided to write on stones. This event is free and open to the public.

## Evening Bealtaine Poem Circles

Head to The Whale Theatre in Greystones at 8pm for an evening of poetry and song in celebration of Poetry Day Ireland.

Join guest poets: Frances Browner, Eithne Hand, Sian Quill, Deirdre McKernan Crosby, and Marc Diamond; musicians: Brian Whelan, John Hutchings, Liam Ruth, and poet/sound therapy practitioner, Layla Moroney, who blends the healing power of sound meditation with the artistry of poetry.

We will also acknowledge the Celtic festival of Bealtaine,

which took place in prehistoric stone circles. These spiritual sites, where bonfires were kindled to welcome the arrival of summer, were believed to have healing properties.

More recently, May Day united workers of the world to campaign for their rights. All of these themes will be reflected in poems and songs to nourish the soul, and a finale of sound bath therapy to soothe the heart and mind.

This event is ticketed. Book from Whale Theatre's website.

Supported by Poetry Ireland through the Bright Ideas Bursary. Poetry Day Ireland is an all island celebration of poetry taking place on Thursday 1st May 2025 with the theme of 'May Day'. Visit poetryday.ie to find events near you and learn how to get involved!



# Ceol Ársa Cláirsí: A Celebration of Irish Harp Music

Friday 9th May, 8:00pm. Mermaid Arts Centre. Tickets: (01) 272 4030

Some of Ireland's most celebrated musicians in Traditional, Classical, and Early Music join forces with award-winning visual artists to present Ceol Ársa Cláirsí - a concert experience that is both musically and visually immersive.

## Cormac Breatnach

Spanish/Basque heritage.

Martin Hayes, Séamus Begley and many more.

An acclaimed whistle player deeply rooted in the Irish tradition, Cormac has performed and recorded with a wide range of artists including Elvis Costello, Vanessa Williams, Donal Lunny, and Susan McKeown. His music is shaped by jazz, blues, and more recently,

## Steve Cooney

Originally from Australia, Dr Steve Cooney is one of the most influential musicians in modern Irish traditional music. A guitarist, composer, producer, and didgeridoo player, he has collaborated with Mary Black, Altan,

## Aisling Ennis

Aisling Ennis is a leading Irish harpist known for her expressive and versatile performance style. She has trained at the Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall School, RIAM, and holds a Master's in

Arts Management from UCD. Her collaborations and programming are wide-ranging and innovative. Aisling has performed at major festivals and venues across Ireland, including with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and at the National Concert Hall. Her 2023 debut solo album Folly of Melancholy has received wide acclaim.

## Malachy Robinson

Principal double bass with the Irish Chamber Orchestra since 1995, Malachy is also a member of Crash Ensemble and the Irish Baroque

Orchestra. He performs regularly on viola da gamba and is a noted interpreter of contemporary Irish music.

## Eamon Sweeney

Dr Eamon Sweeney is a specialist in early plucked-string instruments. He studied classical guitar at TU Dublin

and early music in Barcelona. His extensive performance and teaching career includes collaborations with figures such as the late Seamus Heaney, Mary Coughlan, and Theo Dorgan. Eamon is a regular performer and recording artist, with support from the Arts Council and Music Network. His duo Tonos

with soprano Róisín O'Grady has released two critically acclaimed albums.

## Helen Barry

Helen Barry is a visual artist and early years practitioner known for her cross-disciplinary and participative approach to creating

interactive installations and sensory experiences.

## Cormac O'Connor

Cormac O'Connor is an acclaimed sound and video designer who has worked on over 120 theatre productions across Ireland and the UK. He was the original sound designer for Corcadorca's

# Gearoid Farrelly at Mermaid

Mermaid Arts Centre, Wednesday 30th April, 8pm. Tickets: €25

Gearoid Farrelly follows his mammoth Glamour Hammer tour with a hilarious new stand up show 'Gearoid Rage' touching on the

many, many, MANY things that make his blood boil. Farrelly's razor-sharp wit and impeccable comedic timing guarantee a thoroughly enjoy-

able evening of laughs and that is a definite must-see.

Tickets can be booked through mermaidartscentre.ie or 01 272 4030.



Gearoid Farrelly.

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# Age & Opportunity announces physical activity funding for older people

Age & Opportunity is marking the distribution of its Active National Grant that provides significant funding for sport and physical activity amongst older people. The Grant Scheme is a combined initiative from Age & Opportunity and Sport Ireland. This year it is providing €7,150 to 23 groups in Wicklow.

The Grant Scheme is a combined initiative from Government of Ireland. This year it is providing €300,000 to support sport and physical activities run by 988 groups

and organisations. These range from Active Retirement Groups, ICAs, Men's/Women's Sheds, Physical Activity Leaders (PALs), care settings and other sports and social groups.

By financially supporting organisations to buy equipment and host activities specifically designed for older people, the grant helps older people reap the health benefits of being active. Pickleball and Walking Football continue to grow in popularity and are named in over 40 applications.

Grants were awarded to 188 Irish Countrywomen's Association Guilds, 243 Active Retirement Groups, 64 Men's sheds and 30

Women's sheds, 81 care settings and many more groups.

Every year approximately 32,000 older people take part in physical activity funded by the Grant Scheme. Activities funded include pickleball, aqua aerobics, rowing, dancing, cycling, bowling, self-defence, walking hockey, tai chi, walking, weight-lifting and so many more.

The successful Wicklow groups are: Arklow Active Retirement, Aughrim Co. Wicklow ARA, Avoca ARA, Avoca ICA, Ballycoog ICA Guild, Blessington ARA, Bray Wanderers, Carnew Community Care, Duncannon Friendship Group, Greystones Active Retirement Association,

Association, Greystones Bowling Club, ICA Wicklow Town Guild, Kilcoole Mens Shed, Knockananna Developments - Knockananna Community Hall, Laragh Glendalough Active Retirement Association, Newcastle Community Centre, Roundwood Men's Shed, Tinahely Active Retirement, Tinahely ICA, Tinahely Men's Shed, Wicklow Active Retirement Association, Wicklow Sports Partnership, Wicklow Tennis Club.

The Grant Scheme is part of Age & Opportunity's Active programme, funded by Sport Ireland, and delivered nationwide with the support of the HSE and Local Sports Partnerships.



Dr Una May, CEO Sport Ireland and Sue Guildea, Active Programme Manager, Age & Opportunity.

## RECRUITMENT

### GROUNDSMAN /GARDENER

Charleville Estate  
Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow.

#### JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Gardener/Groundsman
- Full-time, Monday to Friday.

#### ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Garden machinery experience
- Ride on mower experience
- Chainsaw experience not essential
- Spraying course desirable but not essential
- Must have full driving licence.
- 2 /3 years' experience in similar role preferable.
- Chain saw desirable but not essential.

#### DUTIES:

- Grass cutting
- Hedge cutting
- Tree planting
- General garden maintenance

#### SALARY:

- Salary by negotiation.

Email CV to:

Charvillerecruitment123@gmail.com  
or post to: Senior Admin, Charleville,  
Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow, A98V293.

## Wicklow businesses invited to connect, collaborate & get inspired

Calling all Wicklow tourism and hospitality businesses! The Sustainable Tourism Network (STN) is heading to Beyond the Trees, Avondale on Wednesday, April 30th, and you're invited to join a morning full of connections, conversations, and a little bit of tree-top adventure.

This regional networking event will bring together local businesses across County Wicklow

to connect, collaborate, share ideas, spark partnerships, and get practical about sustainability - all

in a fun, relaxed setting at Beyond the Trees, Avondale.

"We're excited to create a space where businesses can come together to exchange ideas and experiences," said Rob Rankin, Managing Director of the Sustainable Tourism Network. "By learning from one another and seeing sustainability in action, we hope to inspire even more positive change within Wicklow's vibrant tourism sector."

The event will include:

- A guided tour of Beyond the Trees, showcasing its innovative and eco-friendly design
- Short talks and case studies from local sustainability leaders
- Structured networking sessions to foster new connections
- Opportunities to share challenges, solutions, and ideas in a collaborative environment

This event is designed to foster connections among tourism businesses, share insights from industry leaders, and inspire sustainable practices across the sector. Attendees will have opportunities to share challenges, solutions, and ideas in a collaborative environment and gain valuable knowledge while having the chance to engage with peers committed to responsible tourism.

Alongside these activities, the morning will feature a lively panel discussion hosted by Roisin

Finlay, with insights from:

- Jim Callery, Climate Action Officer, Wicklow County Council
- Niall Davis, Founder of Biking.ie
- Lorna Kelly, Coordinator, Wicklow Uplands Council
- Anne Pears, New Business Development Manager at Veon

This will then be topped off with plenty of time for good old-fashioned networking and an optional guided treetop walk at the award winning Beyond the Trees, Avondale (and yep, the slide's open too - weather permitting of course!)

Whether you're already a sustainability pro or just starting to explore what it means for your business,

this event is for you. It's about learning from each other, discovering new opportunities, and having a bit of fun while we're at it.

Spots are limited and filling fast, so don't miss your chance to be part of this inspiring morning. Sign up now at: sustainable-tourism-network.ie/regional-networking-events. Please let STN know if you have any accessibility needs when registering.

When: Wednesday,

April 30th

Time: 9:00 AM -

11:30 AM

Where: Beyond the Trees, Avondale

Cost: Free for STN members (and non-members get one free event to see what STN is all about!)

## PLANNING

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Mr. Paul Kennedy seeks full planning permission for a two - bedroom dwelling (maisonette), over the Aughrim Butcher Shop. The 99.17 square meter maisonette has its main entrance through the rear gate and yard (private open space) beside and in line with the adjoining existing development entrances. Planning permission is, also, required for any ancillary site works, including but not limited to, sewage, water, rear yard paving and car parking, all at Main Street, Aughrim, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

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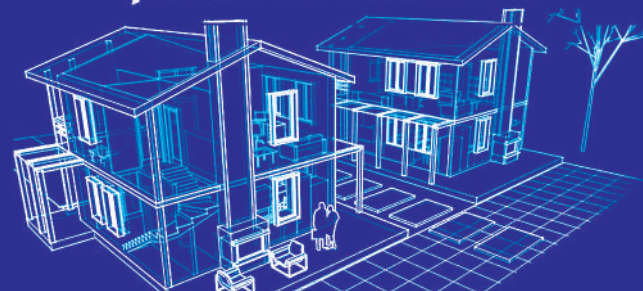
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# Wicklow businesses invited to expert briefing on us tariffs and global trade challenges

*International trade expert Brian Murphy to lead strategic session*

Wicklow County Council, through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), invites local businesses to a crucial in-person morning briefing titled 'Tariffs & Trade Tactics n What Every Business Needs to Know About Mitigating Risk'. This event will take place at The GRID, Charlesland, Greystones (A63 T9K1) on Friday 2nd May starting at 8:30am.

This strategic session will be led by international trade expert Brian Murphy from Global Trade. Murphy will explain the political and economic forces driving recent US tariffs and their direct impact on Irish business operations. Attendees will learn how duties affect sales margins and will explore smarter, diversified market strategies, gaining practical tools to navigate today's increasingly complex global trade environment.

Commenting on the upcoming workshop, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Paul O'Brien, said: "Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, and we encourage everyone to attend this important information session on Friday, 2nd May, with expert Brian Murphy from Global

Trade in order to be informed and prepare if necessary."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, added: "During these uncertain times for business owners and managers, mitigating risk should be a top priority. We are delighted to have secured Brian Murphy from Global Trade to provide insights on how to prepare and navigate through these challenging times."

Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise at the Local Enterprise Office Wicklow, stated: "The Local Enterprise Office supports small businesses with up to 50 employees, helping them understand how they may be impacted, to help mitigate the risk, become more competitive and develop new markets."

Participants can expect to leave the session with clear,

actionable strategies for managing international trade risks. This includes a deeper understanding of the political and economic factors behind tariffs, their effects on pricing and margins, and how to adapt by exploring alternative markets.

The session will feature real-world examples and an interactive Q&A with Brian Murphy, equipping attendees with practical tools to address supply chain vulnerabilities. The event also includes a light breakfast and networking opportunities, making it particularly relevant for Wicklow businesses looking to strengthen their international outlook.

The event is free of charge; however, advance registration is required due to limited capacity.

Registration is available at: <https://www.localenterprise.ie>

# Von Der Leyen invited to Wicklow by Ní Mhurchú

Cynthia Ni Mhurchu, an MEP for Wicklow, has written to EU Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen inviting her to Wicklow and neighbouring counties next month to tour our pharmaceutical and medical technology sector.

Over 600 people are employed in County Wicklow in companies like Takeda, and Jabil/Nypro (MedTech).

According to Ni Mhurchu, "I think it is important that President Von Der Leyen see for herself that we are not talking about isolated factories, but rather operations that are deeply integrated into our local communities, with partnerships in schools, universities, regional authorities, and training centres."

According to Ni Mhurchu, some of the world's most advanced medicines and life-saving medical devices are being made in counties like Wicklow. These include biologics, vaccines, oncology treatments, and implantable cardiac devices. This is an industry which has been built on decades of stable regulation, international partnership, and shared investment in skills, innovation, and community.

According to Ni Mhurchu, I want President Von

Der Leyen to meet the workers, researchers and see for herself how our pharma and med tech industry has created a wider life sciences ecosystem and fostered collaborations with our universities, funded science education in our schools, and supported local charities.

"I believe this tour would send a strong signal not only to global investors, but to the thousands of workers in our region who are proud to be part of Europe and its leading life sciences economy."

Ni Mhurchu has offered to coordinate Von Der Leyen's visit to Wicklow and the Southeast.



Cynthia Ni Mhurchu MEP with EU Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen.

## Gospel: Matthew 7:1-5

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. In the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and the measure you use for others will be used for you. Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and not see the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Come, let me take the speck from your eye' as long as that plank is in your own? Hypocrite, remove the plank out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

## THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

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- HJ** Animal Science Industry
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- HE** Social Studies & Community Care

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- 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
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- RB** Adult Leaving Certificate

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