



**BALTINGLASS PARK**  
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Tuesday 3rd June 2025 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

# 'WHATEVER YOU SAY, SAY NOTHING!'

There are growing fears that the much heralded Greystones Media Campus that promised 1,500 jobs, an overall investment of €300 million and the revitalising of Greystones' commercial life, has being abandoned, and the government don't want to talk about it.

Sinn Féin TD, John Brady, has expressed disappointment following the Taoiseach's refusal to accept any responsibility for safeguarding the future of the Greystones Media Campus project - despite €24 million of taxpayer's money having already been invested through the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF).

Speaking after raising the matter directly

with the Taoiseach in the Dáil, Deputy Brady said: "I asked the Taoiseach to clarify the status of the Greystones Media Campus and to explain what the government intends to do to prevent this vital project from being lost altogether. His response was deeply concerning. He effectively washed his hands of any government involvement, despite clear public interest and

investment in this project. The Greystones Media Campus has the potential to become one of the largest film studios in Ireland and a cornerstone of the county's thriving film and television industry. Wicklow has long been the beating heart of Ireland's film and television production, with major international and domestic productions choosing to base themselves in the county.



The Under 14 Wicklow Team who came 3rd in the U14 Mixed Distance Cross Country Relay at the 2025 Community Games Multi-Sports Finals Gormanstown Park, Co Meath on 25th May. Bronagh Healy (Arklow), Alia Harris, (Ashford-Glenealy), Liadh Fitzmaurice (Roundwood) and Matilda Ayton (Westside).

**Wicklow Child Family Project**

**VOLVO BOLANDS OF WEXFORD**

**family FUN DAY**

**AT CORAL LEISURE WICKLOW**

**SUNDAY JUNE 8TH 11AM-4PM**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 8TH**

**11:00AM - 4PM**

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The campus would further strengthen this position, delivering up to 1,500 jobs and a transformative economic boost to the region.

"However, the future of the development is now uncertain, despite ISIF having already committed €24 million of public funds to the project. It is stonishing that the Taoiseach is willing to turn a blind eye to this", Deputy Brady said. "This is not just a local concern - it is a matter of national economic and cultural importance. Public money has been invested, and the jobs and opportunities this project would create are hanging by a thread. The government cannot walk away now".

Deputy Brady has confirmed that he has written to the IDA, as well as to the Minister

for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, to demand answers and for urgent intervention. He is now calling on the Tánaiste and fellow Wicklow TD, Simon Harris, to intervene directly to ensure the project is revived and brought to completion.

"The people of Wicklow, and the Irish film industry, deserve better than this hands-off approach. The government must act to protect the public investment that has already been made, and to secure the enormous social and economic benefits that the Greystones Media Campus can deliver. I am calling on the government to step up and ensure this vital investment and the 1,500 jobs it promises are not lost".

Social Democrat TD, Jennifer Whitmore is also very worried

that the Campus will be lost and is frustrated by the lack of information

and transparency being provided by the government. "We've been

looking at an empty field in Greystones for

*Continued on page 3*

**FIONNTÁN** *STANDING UP FOR SOUTH WICKLOW*

**Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN TD**

**CONSTITUENCY CLINICS**

**Friday, 6th June**

**CARNEW**  
Enterprise Centre 10-11 am

**ARKLOW**  
Railway Tavern 2:45 - 3:45pm.  
Main Street

**RATHDRUM**  
Bates Restaurant  
(Courtyard) 4:15-5pm

Always happy to help - Contact us on:  
**fionntan.osuilleabhain@oireachtas.ie** or: **089 2102892**

### Mass at Redford Cemetery

The annual mass at Redford Cemetery in Greystones will take place on Friday 27th June at 8pm. All are welcome to attend.

### St. Colmans Family Fun Day

Have a family fun day out on Sunday 27th of July at 2pm in St. Colmans, Rathdrum. A fundraising event to benefit the residents of St Colmans. Raffle will be held on the day with live music and the wheel of fortune. Plus lots of other fun events on the day.

### Glendalough Heritage Forum

Glendalough Community Excavations will return weekdays 23rd June-4th July. If you have an interest in archaeology and Glendalough it is a fantastic experience. Organisers say "We regret we cannot offer places to those under 18 this year. Adult places (subject to availability) are available from fixed blocks of two or three days. No prior knowledge of excavation is required and we endeavour to accommodate people of all abilities. For information and details of application please email glendaloughheritageforum@gmail.com."

### Shankill Classical Music Club

The last meeting of the season is on Wednesday 11th June. 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.

### Cruinniú Na nOg in Wicklow Library

Cruinniú Na nOg takes place in Wicklow Library on Saturday 7th June. There will be a number of events. Calm and Create is a session of mindful, messy, fun, creative art for 4-7 year olds (10:30-11:30am) and 8-13 year olds (12:00-1:00pm). Registration is required. There will be a very special Summer Planting Storytime at 11:00am where attendees will learn all about how bees are so important for our gardens and then we'll plant flower seeds to bring home.

Design a book cover workshop for 9-12yr olds (2.30pm-3.30pm). Booking required. Contact the library at wicklib@wicklowcoco.ie ph 040467025

### Wicklow Hospice Sunflower Days

Wicklow Hospice Sunflower Days will be on 6th and 7th June. Volunteers are needed in Greystones on Saturday afternoon, 7th June. Two hour slots to sell Sunflower Day items: trolley tokens, pens, pins. Funds will go to Wicklow Hospice Magheramore. Please contact Sinead McNamara, 01.4911 072, smcnamara@olh.ie..



The Cars and Coffee Team at the Arklow Cars & Coffee Charity Car Show in aid of Futures in Mind (formerly Talk to Tom), at Arklow Rugby Club.

## Family Fun Day with Volvo: Bolands of Wexford supporting Wicklow Child & Family Project

*Coral Leisure Wicklow. Sunday June 8th 11am-4pm. Test Drive the full Volvo range including the all new XC60. Bring along the kids for fun and games, bouncing castles, ice cream and more while mum or dad test drive one of the stunning new Volvos on show.*

Coral Leisure is proud to announce its partnership with Wicklow Child & Family Project as their designated Charity Partner for 2025. The Wicklow Child & Family Project provides a community based family support service in Wicklow Town and surrounding areas. The project is managed by County Wicklow Partnership and funded through TUSLA Child & Family Agency.

The Project aims to provide services and supports that improves the quality of life for families while promoting the personal, social and educational development of children, young people and their parents always keeping the child at the forefront of their work.

By partnering with WC&FP, Coral Leisure will commit to focus on

several fundraisers throughout the year created by their Wicklow Coral staff members and, of course, a helping hand from local families throughout. The event is to help raise much needed funds to maintain and support upgrading some in-house facilities such as their family outdoor garden areas and play therapy rooms. One of the main events will be the Coral Family Dash. Also, keep an eye out for in-house fundraising events involving our members, staff, and families from the wide community.

If you wish to get involved in any of the Coral Leisure fundraising events this year and can offer and lend a hand, please contact Alana at foh.wicklow@coralleisure.ie for details on how you can get involved.

**Volvo Partnership with Coral Leisure Wicklow - Launching the Volvo Cars Wexford Swimming Academy!**

"At Volvo Cars Wexford, we believe in giving back to the community. That's why we've partnered with Coral Leisure Centre in Wicklow to introduce the Volvo Cars Wexford Swimming Academy - an initiative dedicated to

supporting local charities and promoting water safety.

"This year, we are proud to donate €2,000 to

a charity chosen by Coral Leisure. The 2025 recipient is the Wicklow Child and Family Project, an amazing organization that

provides essential support to children and families in need. But that's not all! We are also committing to donating a percentage

from every car sold in Wicklow to the charity, ensuring continued support throughout the year."



Conan Ruttledge at the Wicklow Sports Partnership Bike Week event in the Murrough Car Park, Wicklow Town. See page 10.

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# Brady urges State to acquire site near Lugnaquilla

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called on the Government to seize a rare opportunity to expand the Wicklow Mountains National Park by acquiring a 1,516-acre site on the market in Aghavannagh, which stretches to the summit of Lugnaquilla, Ireland's second-highest mountain.

The land, comprising heather moorland, rough grazing, and bog, borders the River Ow and lies adjacent to existing public lands. Its acquisition would significantly enhance the ecological integrity and recreational value of the national park.

"This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect and restore a

vital part of Wicklow's natural heritage," said Deputy Brady. "Bringing this land into public ownership would not only safeguard biodiversity and support climate resilience but also open up new possibilities for sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation."

Deputy Brady has also written to Minister of State Christopher

O'Sullivan, urging the Department to explore the purchase of these lands. He emphasised the strategic importance of this site, which adjoins existing public lands and could service as a critical link in expanding the National Park.

"The people of Wicklow and visitors alike cherish our wild landscapes.

By acting now, the Government can ensure that this iconic area is preserved for future generations," Deputy Brady added.

He expressed his willingness to work collaboratively with the Minister and relevant stakeholders to facilitate the acquisition and integration of the land in the National Park.



John Brady TD.

## Report details economic impact of Cliff Walk closure

A report on the economic and business impact of the enforced closure of the Bray Head Cliff Walk, which has been researched and written by economist Jim Power, will be launched in Greystones sailing club at 4pm on Tuesday, June 3rd, by Friends of the Cliff Walk.

Using national and international economic models, including Fáilte Ireland data, as well as information from local businesses, the report has found that the clo-

sure, now in its fifth year, has cost the national economy tens of millions of euro in lost revenue, with a corresponding negative financial impact on Wicklow, and

on Greystones in particular.

The report also shows how the closure runs counter to Wicklow Council's own policies and objectives, including

access to a Public Right of Way, as well as national goals relating to exercise, fitness and combatting obesity.

The report will be presented by Jim Power

who will take questions and be available for interview. The venue and surroundings (Greystones Marina and Bray Head backdrop) make for a suitably photogenic setting for the launch and we hope very much that you can attend.

Jim Power is economic advisor to the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation and a former advisor to both Bank of Ireland and Allied Irish

Banks. He teaches at Dublin City University and the Smurfit Business School, and is a regular media commentator. He will be avail-

able for one-on-one interviews, as will several local business people and volunteers with Friends of the Cliff Walk.

## 'WHATEVER YOU SAY, SAY NOTHING'

Continued from page 1

far too long. The Greystones Media Campus was announced in 2022, a €300 million investment and a "strong vote of confidence" in the local screen sector. It was heralded as a success story at the time, but the reality is far from that. Two years on, there's been no visible progress, no clear timeline, and no transparency."

"This project was supposed to bring 1,500 jobs and transform our town into a hub for the creative industries. Instead, it's become a closed shop. I've submitted multiple Parliamentary Questions to both the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Enterprise looking for clarity, but the Government continues to give out no meaningful information. For a development of this scale, on public

land and backed by public money, that's simply not acceptable."

"When I raised it in the Dáil with then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar in March 2024, the very next day the project's press office contacted RTÉ to say the development was being reignited. But nothing has happened since. It's all smoke and mirrors."

"The Government went into partnership and handed over this land without putting proper safeguards in place. We still don't know the cost, the terms, or what protections exist if the project fails. The Minister needs to come clean on what deal has been done. The people of Greystones deserve transparency, and they deserve better. This is prime land that should be delivering jobs and community benefit, not sitting idle."



Stephen, Liz and William Clarke with Charlotte Jenkinson at the Wicklow Rugby Club dinner dance in the Arklow Bay Hotel.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

**Road to be closed:**  
Beech Road, Bray (L-15802-0).

**Period of closure:**  
Monday 30 June, 2025 to Monday 14 July, 2025.

**Alternative Routes:**  
The temporary diversion route will be via temporary road link between Beech Road and Thornhill View to accommodate essential road works.

**Reason for Closure:**  
This closure is necessary to facilitate the reconstruction of a failed section of the roadway.

Any person wishing to object to the proposed road closure must lodge their objection in writing to Transportation and Infrastructure Delivery, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow or via email at [roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtran@wicklowcoco.ie) not later than 12.00 noon on Tuesday 10th June, 2025.

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

# Fears for future of Wicklow's rivers

*Whitmore warns of irreversible damage to rivers and lakes*

Social Democrat TD Jennifer Whitmore has called out Government's latest move to weaken environmental protections for Ireland's rivers and lakes, a decision she says will have devastating consequences for Wicklow's waterways, including the Vartry and Dargle rivers.

"This is yet another hit to our natural environment," Deputy Whitmore said. "We've already seen consistent degradation of our rivers and Government inaction on it. Now, they're trying to quietly lower the standards for water quality across the country, not because it's the right thing to do, but because they're failing to meet the standards we already have. Rather than trying to address the problems head on, it feels like Government are throwing in the towel on our rivers."

Under the draft River Basin Management Plan, protections for 456 water bodies nationwide are at risk of being diluted by being classified as 'highly modified'. If this goes ahead, it will mean that these water ways will

no longer be subject to water quality standards. In Wicklow, rivers like the Vartry and Dargle, both currently rated as having 'good' ecological status, could face increased pollution and degradation if these changes are introduced.

"The Vartry and Dargle are vital arteries in Wicklow's ecosystem. They support biodiversity, provide clean water, and are central to our tourism and recreation. Weakening protections now will only lead to long-term damage that will be far more costly to fix," Deputy Whitmore explained.

"We've seen what happens when we don't take water quality seriously. Lady's Island Lake in Wexford is a cautionary tale,

where pollution and mismanagement have led to serious ecological decline. We cannot let that happen here in Wicklow," Deputy Whitmore cautioned.

"The Government's approach is not just short-sighted, but dangerous. This is about more than just water. It's about our health, our environment, and our future. Every time the Government chips away at environmental protections, they're making it harder for us to meet our climate and biodiversity goals," Deputy Whitmore added.

"I am calling on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to immediately halt any plans to lower water quality standards and instead invest in proper monitoring, wastewater

treatment, and nature-based solutions to restore and protect Ireland's rivers and lakes," Deputy Whitmore pleaded.

"We should be strengthening protections, not weakening them. We should be restoring our rivers, not polluting them. And we should be listening to communities who care deeply about their local environment, not sidelining them," Deputy Whitmore added.

"The people of Wicklow want clean rivers, healthy ecosystems, and a government that takes its environmental responsibilities seriously. It's time for the Government to stop making excuses and start protecting what matters," Deputy Whitmore concluded.



Jennifer Whitmore TD.

## Newcastle cleanup collects 40kg of waste

Cllr Stephen Stokes has praised the efforts of local residents and volunteers following a successful village cleanup in Newcastle. The event took place on Saturday, May 17th.

The clean-up saw over 40kg of waste collected from roadsides, green areas, and public spaces.

The event was organised by Newcastle Tidy Towns and led by Chairperson Philip

McGaley. It brought together a strong turnout of community members dedicated to keeping

their village clean and welcoming.

Armed with litter pickers, bags, and gloves,

volunteers tackled key areas throughout the village, making a visible difference in just a few short hours.

Cllr Stokes commended the initiative. He stated: "This is what community spirit looks like. I want to thank each and every person who gave up their time to take part

in the cleanup. Newcastle is a beautiful village, and efforts like this help preserve that charm for residents and visitors alike. Special thanks to Philip McGaley and the Newcastle Tidy Towns group for their leadership and ongoing commitment. It was also wonderful to see so many young people take part."

The 40kg of waste

collected serves as both a testament to the effectiveness of the cleanup and a reminder of the ongoing need to protect and respect the local environment. Newcastle Tidy Towns continues to promote civic pride and sustainable living through regular cleanups, planting initiatives, and environmental awareness campaigns.

A special note of

thanks was mentioned to Watchorn's Daybreak who supplied a free ice cream to each volunteer. Cllr Stephen Stokes concluded: "We're delighted with the turnout and the results. Every bag collected helps to make Newcastle a cleaner, greener place. It's encouraging to see so many residents get involved - their support makes all the difference."



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Cllr Stephen Stokes with the clean-up volunteers in Newcastle.

V O L V O

## Volvo Boland's Test Drive Family Fun Day

# XC60

**Considering your next car – or simply curious to try something new?**



Join Volvo Bolands for a Test Drive Family Fun Day, in support of the Wicklow Child and Family Project. Discover the Volvo range firsthand – from sleek electric models to powerful SUVs. It's the perfect opportunity to experience what makes Volvo different.

**Sunday, June 8th**  
**Coral Leisure Wicklow, A67CF88**  
**All day event - no bookings required.**



Mary Ann Wall and Tyra Doyle at the Arklow Cars & Coffee charity car show in aid of Futures in Mind (formerly Talk to Tom) at Arklow Rugby Club.

# Spiralling Wicklow house prices lead to calls for ban on rent increases

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has called on the government to immediately introduce a ban on rent increases, as new figures show rents continuing to spiral beyond the reach of ordinary workers and families.

According to the latest Daft.ie Rental Price Report from Q1 of this year, the average monthly rent in County Wicklow has now soared to €2,106, representing a 4.9% increase in the past year alone. Meanwhile, figures published by the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) show an even more alarming trend, with rents for new tenancies increasing by 11.9% in comparison to last year.

Speaking on the issue, Deputy Brady said: "These figures lay bare the harsh reality that people in Wicklow - and across the country - are facing. Rents are now completely out of control. An

average monthly rent of over €2,100 in Wicklow is simply unaffordable for the vast majority of people. The RTB's 11.9% increase for new tenancies shows how landlords are exploiting loopholes and continuing to hike up rents whenever a tenancy changes hands.

"This is not sustainable. Ordinary workers, families, and young people trying to build a future are being pushed out of their communities, unable to afford basic housing. People are being priced into poverty.

"It is clear that the government's housing policy has failed. They have allowed the

market to dictate everything, with no regard for affordability or fairness. The time for half-measures is over."

Deputy Brady is calling on the government to immediately introduce a ban on future rent increases to give renters a break and stop the current crisis from worsening further. If this government is serious about addressing the ever-worsening housing crisis, it must step in now and freeze rents. Anything less is a betrayal of the thousands of people who are struggling every single day, just to keep a roof over their heads. Renters need protection - not more broken promises."



John Brady TD.

## Over 2,500 Wicklow homebuyers benefit from Help to Buy Scheme

A total of 2,571 first-time buyers in Wicklow have benefited from the Government's Help to Buy Scheme, with €59.2 million in tax refunds claimed since the scheme was launched in 2017, according to Tánaiste Simon Harris.

"Fine Gael introduced the Help to Buy Scheme in 2017 to assist first-time buyers in Wicklow and across the country to either buy a newly built house or apartment or self-build a new home.

"The scheme provides up to €30,000 to be used towards your deposit. It gives a refund of the income tax and Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) you have paid in Ireland for the 4 years before the year you apply.

"Almost 55,000 individuals or couples across the country have benefited from this scheme since we introduced it in 2017. We've also seen 2,571 successful applicants in Q1 of 2025, which shows the continued support from buyers for this scheme.

"The Help to Buy Scheme is just one of many ways we're helping more people achieve home ownership," the Tánaiste added.

"We're also delivering on planning reform, expanding zoned land for housing, and ensuring better infrastructure to unlock housing potential.

"This scheme has been hugely beneficial for so many people in Wicklow looking to buy their own home and I hope people across the country continue to avail of the scheme," concluded Tánaiste Simon Harris.

## 'Give new housing NPF targets to County Councils'

New Housing National Planning Framework (NPF) targets must urgently be given to the County Councils so that they can amend their County Development Plans according to former Councillor, now TD, Deputy Edward Timmins.

Speaking from Dail Eireann, Deputy Timmins remarked: "Currently many planning permissions are being refused because the Development Plans core strategy has population targets that are too low. As a result of the delay, I have seen a planning application for 335 houses in Blessington, supported by the Council and all elected members, being refused by an Bord Pleanála because the Local Area Plan was not up-to-date with new housing targets.

"I have advised the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Deputy John Cummins that I'm also concerned about the time taken for these amendments to County Development plans. It is too long and can take about nine months. I have suggested that we must explore ways to expedite this

timeframe.

"Secondly, the issue of headroom i.e. zone more land than the population targets imply, in the zonings must be addressed. From my experience of Development Plans the previous direction from the Office of the Planning Regulator was zero percentage headroom which was very misguided. It is imperative that there is a considerable percentage headroom because in practice many sites will not be developed for various reasons so extra land must be zoned.

"All landowners are not 'ready to go developers' and the real world site development often has many obstacles including cost and may lead to planning refusals. I would suggest headroom of the order of 70%.

"Regarding tiered zoning, this refers to

lower tiers with less services. But in many current plans, it is tiered even when they both have access to services. So there should be no tiered zoning in these cases as if Tier One is not developed, it stops Tier Two from being developed.

"From a national point of view, Councils must be closely involved in the delivery of housing. Delivery must be micromanaged. These targets must be drilled down further with monthly figures produced by all Local Authorities of actuals versus targets and explanations given. This is the only way to deliver large numbers of houses. The Minister must then meet the CEOs of the Councils and the Heads of Planning on a quarterly basis. This method is exactly the way a business would aim to achieve its targets."

## LDA to deliver over 300 new homes in Shankill

### *New Dart-accessible development in Woodbrook to be completed by end of 2026*

328 new homes in Shankill. The new A-rated apartments are being delivered in Woodbrook and include 102 one-bed and 226 two-bed homes.

The homes are being delivered in partnership with Castlethorn property developers, through the LDA's Project Tosaigh initiative. This is where the Agency partners with private homebuilders, providing the financial stimulus required to initiate construction and complete new housing projects.

The completed homes are then owned by the LDA and made available as cost rental or sold by the LDA in partnership with local authorities through affordable purchase schemes.

In this case, all of the 328 Woodbrook apartments will be made available as cost rental. Cost rental is a relatively new tenure, which provides a secure, long-term rental option with rents at least 25% below market rates.

Cost rental is designed to assist those who do not qualify for social housing or other state housing supports, but who are struggling to afford to rent in the private market.

The apartments are part of Castlethorn's Woodbrook development, which includes 685 homes and has the potential to deliver an additional 500 homes. The development will also feature excellent amenities including a creche, a primary school and neighbour centre, helping to create a vibrant and well-serviced community.

The acquisition of the Woodbrook apartments means the LDA has now delivered or secured the delivery of almost 5,000 homes via Project Tosaigh. The Agency is

targeting the delivery of 8,000 Project Tosaigh homes and continues to source new housing developments under the initiative.

There are now over 1,500 households living in an LDA cost rental home, with a further 350 LDA homes either sold or sale agreed through the Government's affordable purchase schemes.

In addition to Project Tosaigh, the LDA is also in the process of directly delivering 19,000 homes on State-owned or acquired land.

The Woodbrook apartments are being delivered in 2 blocks over 6 storeys and are due to be completed by 2026. They are located beside Woodbrook Golf Club.



# 20% increase in power cuts in the Wicklow area

*ESB's Arklow region power supply shows 1,725 power cuts in the wider Wicklow area in 2024, up from 1,433 in 2023 and 1,256 in 2021.*

Ireland South MEP, Cynthia Ní Mhurchú has raised significant concerns about ESB Networks performance in relation to power cuts faced by domestic and business customers across Ireland.

Figures provided to Cynthia Ní Mhurchú by ESB Networks under Freedom of Information show significant year on year increases in power cuts across Ireland between 2021 and 2024.

There were 64,754 power cuts across Ireland in 2024, both planned and unplanned outages. That is a 22% increase on 2023 where we had 53,067 power cuts. Between 2021 and 2024, we have seen a 40%

increase in the number of power cuts, both planned and unplanned, across Ireland.

Some areas across Ireland seem more prone to power cuts than others. Enniscorthy had 2,507 power cuts in 2024, compared to Limerick which only had 737 power cuts in 2024. Sligo had 3,211 power cuts in 2024, up from 1,973 in 2021. Letterkenny had 2,258 power cuts in 2024, up from

1,354 power cuts in 2021! Waterford, Limerick, and Cork had some of the lowest number of power cuts across the grid in 2024.

ESB Networks have provided Ní Mhurchú with a breakdown of the reasons for the power cuts which included bird strikes, weather issues, lightning, overhead refurbishment, overloading, and corrosion. Of more concern was the large increase in power cuts which were attributed to 'defective equipment'.

Ní Mhurchú has called on ESB Networks to clarify why there is a 22% jump in power outages across the country between 2023 and 2024.

She has also called for a new system of compensation for householders and small businesses for outages lasting more than 12 hours. She also said that customers should not be charged for standing charges and levies when the power is out. The CRU, our regulator, has raised significant

concerns about ESBN's performance in relation to unplanned outages and customer interruptions fining the utility millions for missing clearly set down targets. According to Ní Mhurchú, the ESB is a profitable company that should be prioritising increased investment in our electricity grid.

"My worry is that ESB Networks may be trying to cut costs by not investing in our electricity infrastructure to the

extent that they should be. Power cuts have an enormous impact on families, in particular as many homes are now passive homes that depend on heat pumps and don't have open fires or stoves.

Ní Mhurchú has described the dramatic increase in the number of power outages as requiring an explanation from ESB Networks. "Customers deserve an explanation as to why they are facing more power cuts when they are paying the second highest electricity prices in Europe. The least Irish customers deserve is more investment in the infrastructure that delivers that electricity."



Ireland South MEP Cynthia Ní Mhurchú.



Jennifer Whitmore TD.

## Data centres already account for 21% of electricity consumed

The government must heed warnings that new housing developments will be put at risk if it continues to roll out the red carpet for data centres, according to Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore.

Deputy Whitmore, who is the party's spokesperson on energy, said: "Oonagh Buckley, secretary general at the Department of Environment, Climate and Energy, has painted a stark picture for the government if it allows further expansion of data centres. She warned that power shortages will result in the

State having to choose whether it prioritises artificial intelligence (AI) or new homes.

"Such a scenario would be unthinkable in the middle of our worst ever housing crisis. While the Taoiseach has previously hit out at critics of the government's expansion policy, there is growing concern among experts in this field over the impact of data centres on our energy security.

"The figures are shocking. Existing data centres are using 21 per cent of all electricity consumed in the State, while this rises to a staggering 50 per cent in the Dublin-Meath region. This is simply unsustainable.

"The government needs to be strategic when it comes to our energy infrastructure and cannot allow a situation where

there is a free for all for data centres. We must make informed choices about how many data centres we can afford, not just in terms of energy security, but also how it impacts our climate action ambitions.

"This latest warning should serve as an urgent wake-up call for the government ahead of a decision by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) on what policy, or restrictions, should apply to new data centres: concluded Deputy Whitmore.

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# Rathdrum Town Team formed to support community and town regeneration

Wicklow County Council has announced the formation of the Rathdrum Town Team, a new group that brings together local residents, businesses, and community organizations to enhance Rathdrum as a great place to live, work, and visit.

This initiative aligns with the national Town Centre First Policy and has been developed in close partnership with Wicklow County Council.

The Rathdrum Town Team unites local stakeholders, business owners, community groups, and public representatives who share a vision of promoting sustainable growth and well-being in Rathdrum. The team will focus on strategic actions to support local businesses, improve public spaces and elevate Rathdrum's profile as a vibrant destination for both residents and visitors.

This collaborative effort reflects the spirit of the Town Centre First Policy, which aims to

revitalise and strengthen town centres across Ireland, encouraging investment and community engagement. Wicklow County Council is proud to collaborate with the Rathdrum community through this initiative, ensuring that local ideas and projects align with broader county and national plans.

The formation evening for the team saw strong local support, with Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District Cllr. Pat Kennedy, attending alongside fellow councillors Pier Leonard and Warren O'Toole. They joined community members in celebrating the establishment of the team.

Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District



Members of the Rathdrum Town Team and Cllr. Pat Kennedy, Cllr. Peir Leonard and Cllr. Warren O'Toole.

Cllr. Pat Kennedy, said, "I warmly welcome the formation of the Rathdrum Town Team. This initiative is a wonderful example of how collaboration between local people, businesses,

and the Council can create positive momentum for Rathdrum. Together, we can build a stronger, more vibrant Rathdrum that supports our community, local economy, and enhances the quality of

life for everyone who lives here or visits."

Tim Ryan, Chairperson of the Rathdrum Town Team, stated, "We are pleased to bring together people from all parts of the community to make

Rathdrum a welcoming and lively town. This team is all about supporting each other and creating a great place for everyone."

Stephen Clarke, Town Regeneration Officer

from Wicklow County Council, added, "It's fantastic to see this community-driven initiative taking shape. Wicklow County Council is here to support the Rathdrum Town Team as they help

bring new energy to their town." The Rathdrum Town Team warmly invites everyone in the community to get involved, share ideas, and help make Rathdrum an even better place for all.

## Official opening of newly refurbished Baltinglass Community Park

On Monday 27th May, the newly refurbished Baltinglass Community Park was officially opened by Cathaoirleach Cllr. Paul O'Brien in the presence of Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District Patsy Glennon.

The park recently underwent a significant refurbishment, which included the creation of a new 1.5 km tarmacked looped walking track around its perimeter, a new playground, a basketball court, outdoor tech ball and table tennis tables, as well as tree and hedge planting.

The work in the park was carried out in different stages, with funding allocated from the Department of Rural and Community Development

and the Department of Sports. The total investment in the park amounted to approximately €700,000.

The Department of Rural and Community Development provided:

- €425,000 from Community Recognition Fund
  - €225,000 from Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
- Additionally, the Participation Nation Fund, provided by the Department of Sports, contributed €50,000.

The upgrade works in the park were executed and supervised by Baltinglass Municipal District staff, under the guidance of District Engineer Dermot Graham and General Services Supervisor Shamy O'Halloran and his team. Contributions to the project were made by the Baltinglass District Forum and Baltinglass Tidy Towns. This collaborative approach has greatly contributed to the project's success.

Further funding has been applied for to continue the upgrade works in the park. Future plans include:

- A bandstand and paved area.
  - Completion of a CCTV project, with cameras to be installed in the park.
- Funding for this project has been secured, and work has commenced, with completion expected within the next 12 to 18 months.

The refurbishment will ensure that Baltinglass Park continues to be a vital resource for everyone in the community.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Paul O'Brien noted that "Baltinglass Town Park is now not just a park - it is a place where children can play, where friends can walk and talk, and where we can all enjoy the beauty of nature and the joy of community. Let

this space continue to grow, to welcome, and to inspire."

Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District, Cllr. Patsy Glennon said he welcomed the upgrade works in Baltinglass Park and commended those who secured the funding and carried out the work in the park. He called for further investment to be allocated for projects in the Baltinglass Municipal District highlighting the need for better sporting

and public amenities for the people of the area.

The Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, said, "There has been positive feedback from the people of Baltinglass regarding the improvement works, which has been reflected in a significant increase in the number of people using the park regularly. This Park is a reflection of what can be accomplished when we work together, when we support one another, and when we

build with purpose."

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore, has commended the community of Baltinglass after the opening of the Park: "It's amazing to see the transformation of this park, which now features a 1.5km tarmacked looped walking track and a brand-new playground. Despite a spell of rain, there was a great atmosphere at the opening and you could really sense the strong community spirit in Baltinglass," Deputy Whitmore said.

"I visited this playground last February with

Social Democrat local rep Deirdre McCormack, at a time where people were really concerned about anti-social behaviour and the state of some of the equipment. Locals were worried that the park was going to be forgotten amidst upgrades to the town itself. It's so heartwarming to see the progress made between then and now and the revived town park.

"The transformation of the park is a testament to all of the hard work of the Council staff and construction workers and the determination of the local

community. The new playground and walking trail are going to bring huge benefits to local families, young people, and older residents alike. It's an inclusive and accessible space that will be enjoyed for generations.

"I know this project has been long-awaited and hard-won. The dedication from local advocates and the investment from Wicklow County Council have paid off, and today's opening shows how public spaces can truly reflect and serve the needs of their communities."



Cathaoirleach Cllr. Paul O'Brien and Cathaoirleach of Baltinglass Municipal District, Cllr. Patsy Glennon. Photo by Liam Cullen.



Local Elected Officials and members of Wicklow County Council. Photo credit: Liam Cullen.

# Aontú slams Government over National Children's Hospital fiasco

## Calls for Tánaiste Simon Harris to resign

Aontú's Wicklow representative, Ciarán Hogan, has issued a strong call for Tánaiste Simon Harris to resign, citing the latest in a series of costly blunders surrounding the National Children's Hospital.

Speaking to the *Wicklow Times*, Hogan declared: "It's completely unacceptable that a project fails this massively and no one loses their job. This is both immoral and scandalous. The shame should be cast on Mr. Harris but also on the Fine Gael apparatus that allowed this level of incompetence to 'fail upwards' for so long. Every Fine Gael TD and councillor should carry the shame of the organisation that burned through billions of taxpayer money-money that should have gone into housing, healthcare, and public services that we so desperately need."

The latest revelation, that the hospital's Mass Tandem Spectrometer won't even fit into the building designed for it, has prompted widespread outrage. The essential equipment will now require expensive retrofitting of the hospital's laboratory space, further delaying the opening and pushing the total project cost beyond €2.3 billion, already 300% over budget.

Hogan continued: "I hope this comes as a wake-up call to the people of Wicklow, who

rightfully demand an immediate and decisive change in their county and country's leadership. Over the last five years, the government has destroyed our Garda forces, reduced hospital capacity, let the cost of living and utility prices soar to the highest levels in Europe, and now we're faced with a hospital project that's draining billions and isn't even finished. The machines don't fit in the door. It's outrageous."

Aontú Leader and Meath West TD Peadar Tóibín also condemned the government's mismanagement, highlighting the repeated and costly errors at the National Children's Hospital. "The golden rule of construction-measure twice and cut once-is an alien concept to this government," he said. "They measure once, and the taxpayer pays twice. This hospital has been altered for the thousandth time to fix blunders. Any construction site will have mistakes, but this government is a fiasco factory."

Tóibín added: "It's clear we can no longer afford this level of waste. Simon Harris still won't confirm whether he signed off on the hospital contract, though he later admitted 'the

buck stops with me'. Yet no one has been held accountable."

At Aontú's recent Ard Fheis, Tóibín addressed the nation in a televised speech outlining "the failures and incompetence of this government", with the National Children's Hospital at the heart of his criticism.

In Wicklow, Hogan has been a vocal critic of the government's inaction and waste. At the recent March to Save Herbert Road in Bray, where Tóibín joined local Aontú members, Hogan reminded attendees: "When the Tánaiste says he can do nothing about these projects, that's not true. It's a dereliction of duty. The solution lies in people power-getting out on the streets and making your voice heard."

The latest revelations about the National Children's Hospital echo past blunders, including the infamous 2019 Dáil printer that was too large for its designated space. Hogan concluded: "Is there any area of government that they're even making a passing grade on? The failures we've seen-from housing to healthcare to basic accountability-are simply unacceptable."



Mark Mitchell.

## Wicklow man is the face of World MS Day Campaign

Wicklow's Mark Mitchell (pictured) was the face of MS Ireland's World MS Day Campaign. World MS Day was on May 30th, and the theme this year was 'Diagnosis.' This global event aims to raise awareness about Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and provide a platform for individuals affected by MS to share their unique diagnosis stories.

Mark Mitchell is a proud Wicklow man living with multiple sclerosis since 2000. He's a 66 year old living in Greystones. He is father to four children, Laura, Emma, Brian and John and husband to Ros. Mark has experienced a range of MS symptoms over the years such as on going fatigue, spasms in legs, speech, walking difficulties etc, and has overcome numerous challenges.

Mark uses a communication device called a Lightwriter to communicate with and receives physiotherapy twice weekly to aid his walking and mobility. Mark is has a positive outlook. He is a keen writer, writing for the MS Writers Group, an avid music fan, thrives on fundraising for his local branch - MS East Wicklow Branch, plays bridge four times a week.

He has been involved with MS Ireland for numerous years and is a great supporter of our advocacy activities. He served on the board of MS Ireland and has been chair of his local branch for several years.

The campaign will run for six weeks starting on World MS Day, reaching audiences in major cinema chains including Odeon, IMC, and Omniplex, as well as independent cinemas, covering a total of 83 locations nationwide. The advert offers a portrayal of the everyday realities of living with MS, aiming to promote understanding and connection.

## Critical hospital wait times



Jennifer Whitmore TD .

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has raised concerns over the prolonged wait times at St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin, which serves many Wicklow constituents.

Recent data reveals that the average A&E wait time at St Vincent's is 9.3 hours, significantly higher than the national average of 7.2 hours.

"I am deeply concerned about the extended wait times at St Vincent's Hospital. Our elderly population, in particular, is facing unacceptable delays in receiving care," Deputy Whitmore stated.

"St Vincent's is a crucial healthcare facility for Wicklow residents, and these wait times, in emergency situations, are simply not acceptable.

"The national average wait time of 7.2 hours already highlights a systemic issue, but the situation at St Vincent's is even more alarming. We need immediate action to address these delays and ensure that all patients receive timely and effective care," Deputy Whitmore emphasised.

"I am calling on Government to work with the HSE to find a sustainable solution to reduce these emergency wait times and ensure that our healthcare service is up to scratch," Deputy Whitmore concluded.



Pictured are the HSE Dublin South & Wicklow Anti Human Trafficking Team (AHTT) supporting a major day of action at Dublin Airport on Thursday, 15th May along with other support agencies. The event was the first in a planned programme of action to highlight and tackle human trafficking and improve identification and support. The HSE Dublin South & Wicklow AHTT were present to support the event and provide advice around how the AHTT team is supporting identified victims of human trafficking.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCHEMES

Wicklow County Council invites applications under the Community Involvement Scheme. This scheme relates to public roads only.

This scheme encourages a joint approach between the Council and groups of local residents and landowners for the restoration of roads, mainly local or cul de sac roads. The Community Involvement Scheme will be based on community contributions, contained in the application form.

Application Forms and details are available on Wicklow County Council's website [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie) or by contacting the undersigned.

The closing date for applications is Monday, 30th June, 2025.

Mark O'Neill, Administrative Officer,  
Transportation & Infrastructure Delivery,  
Wicklow County Council, County Buildings,  
Station Road, Wicklow.

Tel: 0404 20100

E-mail: [roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:roadtrans@wicklowcoco.ie)

# Bike Week festival brings energy and excitement to Wicklow Town

Wicklow Town buzzed with activity on Thursday, 15th May as hundreds of people gathered at Murrough Car Park to participate in the 2025 Bike Week Festival. Organised by the Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership and funded by the National Transport Authority, the festival provided a vibrant day filled with cycling-themed activities, all free of charge.

This year's festival marked the highly anticipated return of the StreetVelodrome, which was a standout attraction during last year's Bike Week event in Blessington. Adding to the excitement was an

outdoor spin class coordinated by Coral Leisure Wicklow, while the Sports Room offered hands-on support with a bike maintenance station. A lively bike skills zone allowed younger participants to test their abilities, and a

sensory pod bus provided a calming space for those who needed a quiet moment.

Speaking at the festival, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Paul O'Brien praised the initiative's community impact: "It's fantastic to

see so many families, young people and local residents embracing Bike Week and coming together to celebrate cycling."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, emphasised the festival's impor-

tance in the county's sustainability goals: "Cycling is a key part of our climate and active travel strategies. The Bike Week Festival demonstrates how enjoyable and accessible cycling can be and it's an excellent way to inspire long-term change in how we navigate our towns and communities."

Director of Services at Wicklow County Council, Theresa O'Brien commended the collaborative effort behind the event: "This festival is a brilliant example of what we can achieve when local partners, service providers and national funders unite with a shared vision. The atmosphere here today illustrates how valued these opportunities are by the public."

Aisling Hubbard, Coordinator of Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership, expressed her pride in the event's success: "From the youngest children in the skills zone to adults trying out spin classes or getting their bikes serviced, the engagement



Scott Doyle at the Wicklow Sports Partnership Bike Week event in the Murrough Car Park, Wicklow Town.



The Disco Yoga Dancers at the Wicklow Sports Partnership Bike Week event in the Murrough Car Park, Wicklow Town.

was incredible. It's days like this that remind us of the power of sport and recreation to bring people together."

The Bike Week Festival continues to grow as a flagship celebration in County Wicklow, reinforcing the

county's commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles, active travel, and inclusive community events.



The Wicklow Sports Partnership team at the Wicklow Sports Partnership Bike Week event in the Murrough Car Park, Wicklow Town.

# Brady slams Government for failing West Wicklow on swimming pool funding

*'Major departmental underspend leaves no justification for lack of funding'*

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed dismay at the gross underspend by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in areas of local sports and infrastructure. This information was provided in documents from the Department before their appearance at the recent Public Accounts Committee meeting, of which Deputy Brady is the chairperson.

It was revealed that the Department underspent by €3.2 million on swimming pool grants to local authorities. In addition, a mere 21% of the Sport's Large Scale Sport's Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF), budget was utilised - only a €3.1 million out of a total allocation of €14.6 million. This is all the more alarming considering that Wicklow County Council has once again been overlooked for funding under LSSIF in relation to the long-overdue and much-needed development of a public swimming pool in West Wicklow.

Speaking on the issue, Deputy Brady said: "I am frankly dismayed that despite these massive underspends, Wicklow County Council's application for funding to deliver a swimming pool in West Wicklow has been ignored. It is a disgrace that taxpayer money is left sitting idle in departmental accounts, while essential facilities are denied to our communities.

"All of the existing swimming pools in the county are allocated



John Brady TD.

in the east, leaving the people of West Wicklow completely without access. This is more than just sport - it's about health, wellbeing and water safety. Children in West Wicklow have nowhere to learn to swim, and families have no access to a vital public amenity that should be available to all."

Deputy Brady highlighted the chronic underinvestment in West Wicklow more broadly, adding: "This is yet another example of the consistent underfunding and neglect of West Wicklow by our successive governments. Time and time again, our communities are left behind when it comes to infrastructure, public transport, and now even basic sports and leisure facilities. That must change."

He concluded by calling on the Department to immediately address the funding shortfall: "There is absolutely no justification for this level of underspend, particularly when there are projects like this crying out for funding. For years, the community campaign group has been working hard to fight for a swimming pool in the area, and to see that there was an underspend in this budget when the group was denied funding is extremely disappointing. I have written to the Minister for Sport seeking clarification on this decision."

## Tiglin annual report highlights lives changed and lessons for policy

**Tiglin, one of Ireland's leading organisations addressing addiction, homelessness, and social exclusion, officially launched its 2024 Annual Report at a special event titled Social Care in Action, held at Leinster House.**

The event was hosted by Tiglin founder and Senator Aubrey McCarthy, who was recently appointed to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Local Government. It showcased the charity's impactful and life-changing work across the country.

The report outlines a year of intense activity and growing need. In 2024 alone, Tiglin's frontline Lighthouse Cafe served over 100,000 hot meals - an indicator of the deepening crisis of homelessness and hardship in Ireland.

Social Care in Action brought together members of the Oireachtas, frontline workers, service users, and supporters. It offered a rare opportunity for policymakers to hear directly from those working on, and affected by, the realities of Ireland's social care landscape. A central theme was the role of lived experience in shaping effective national policy, particularly in the areas of addiction recovery, housing, and reintegration.

Among the speakers were Tiglin graduates Paul and Nicola, who shared powerful personal stories of transformation. Nicola reflected on her past: "My main goal for



Tiglin founder, Senator Aubrey McCarthy. Photo by Annie Thompson

the day used to be just to drink. That was it. And saying it now -it's heartbreaking."

Paul described how his life has changed: "Right now, in the community, I'm not 'Paul the addict' anymore. I'm just Paul. People don't know my past unless I tell them. And for the first time, I see a future - one where I give back and help others find their way too."

Senator McCarthy, who founded Tiglin 15 years ago, has led its growth into a national organisation. Today, Tiglin operates across seven locations, offering rehabilitation, supported housing, education, youth outreach, and community employment programmes. All of its work is grounded in a holistic, person-centred approach of restoration and dignity.

The 2024 Annual Report highlights remarkable outcomes, including:

- 134 residents supported through rehabilitation centres
- 220 residents in supported housing
- 111 residents awarded third-level certificates
- 531 family support interventions
- 83 community employment participants
- 18 jobs created through social enterprises



Abbie Walsh and Rachel Foley at the Arklow Cars & Coffee charity car show in aid of Futuresin Mind (formerly Talk to Tom), at Arklow Rugby Club.

## Neutrality Roadshow visits Charlesland

**On Thursday, 29th May, the Neutrality Roadshow visited Charlesland in Greystones to discuss the government's proposed plans to amend the mechanism known as the Triple Lock, which regulates the deployment of Irish Defence Forces overseas. The event formed part of a one-month tour of Ireland, aimed at hosting conversations with local communities at a time when debates around Ireland's role in international peacekeeping and defence are gaining prominence.**

The event, held at 2pm in Charlesland Community Centre, featured contributions from a range of speakers including peace activists, academics, legal scholars, and local campaigners. The discussions focused on the implications of changes to the Triple Lock and broader issues related to Irish neutrality.

The Triple Lock mechanism currently requires that any deployment of Irish Defence Forces overseas must have the approval of the Dáil, the Government, and a UN mandate. Earlier this year, the government brought legislation to Cabinet proposing changes to this arrangement. Supporters of the government's approach argue that flexibility is needed for Ireland to respond to evolving security challenges, including participation in EU and potentially NATO-led missions. However, critics argue that such changes could undermine Ireland's longstanding policy of neutrality.

Niamh Ní Bhriain, organiser of the Neutrality Roadshow and a representative of the Transnational Institute, commented: "Since the foundation of the state, Irish troops have only served overseas on UN-mandated missions.

Removing the Triple Lock could fundamentally alter Ireland's engagement with international peace and security, and may risk making the country a target for future conflicts."

Kellie McConnell, spokesperson for North Wicklow Against Genocide and Wicklow United Against Racism, expressed concerns about the potential shift towards militarisation: "Ireland needs homes and health services, not bombs and warplanes. The government's push for militarisation is a distraction from urgent domestic priorities. Instead of spending millions on military upgrades, we should be funding the resources we need to live good lives."

The government has stated that the proposed changes aim to ensure that Ireland can respond more effectively to international crises and fulfil its obligations to peacekeeping and collective security. The event in Charlesland was part of a broader, grassroots initiative to encourage public discussion around neutrality and defence policy.

The Roadshow was not affiliated with any political party and was designed to provide a platform for open dialogue on Ireland's role in international peacekeeping and neutrality.



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# Pure Mile volunteers collect over 1,700 bags of litter and rubbish from the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands

The environmental and community initiative, the Pure Mile, which encourages communities and groups to adopt a mile of road (or miles of road) and work with Pure organising litter picks and clean ups, has removed over 1,700 bags of litter and rubbish from Wicklow/Dublin Uplands since last November.



Pure Mile litter picks are organised throughout the year and approximately 900 litter picks/clean-ups have already taken place. These clean-up events have resulted in the collection of over 1,700 bags of litter, rubbish, and dumping, from the Wicklow/Dublin upland environment, all by thousands of Pure Mile Volunteers. One recent Pure Mile clean-up of the Wicklow/Dublin uplands resulted in the collection of over 75 bags of rubbish. Pure Mile Groups were responsible for the collection of over 410 bags of litter in March with an additional 550 bags in April.

Apart from general litter, other discarded material dumped on the environment included, tyres, batteries, mattresses, radios, hovers, TV's, cables, piping, furniture, chairs, bedframes, building materials, plaster board, timber, carpets, lino, metal, flooring, toys, prams, buckets, bikes, and much more. Every Pure Mile clean-up makes a huge difference to the Wicklow/Dublin environment and Pure are emphasising that every litter pick event organised by Pure Mile Groups in the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands, regardless of the amount of rubbish removed, has a positive impact on this unique landscape and environment. Pure Mile groups are also contacting Pure to report illegal dumping sites that they find on the landscape during their litter picks, and Pure are ensuring a swift removal of the dumping with the project receiving 360 reports so far this year.

The Wicklow/Dublin Uplands is a unique landscape and environment and although Pure has removed tonnes of illegal dumping from this beautiful scenic landscape, they only have one truck and one driver, so they are unable to remove the unsightly small-scale litter from the area. Pure have been working with Walking Groups, Hiking

Groups, Cycling Groups, Running Groups, Businesses and Organisations, who are looking after areas in the Wicklow Mountains National Park. This area is of both Irish and European significance and protected under the European Habitats Directive as a Special Area of Conservation. Pure Mile Volunteers have commented to Pure that most of the litter in the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands consists of cans, bottles, wrappers, and plastic, located at viewing points and pull-ins, no doubt discarded there by people enjoying the scenic landscape and tranquil beauty of the area. Because of Pure Mile Volunteers' enthusiasm, energy, and commitment, people have noticed considerable improvements in the areas adopted by Pure Mile Groups.

Several litter picks

and clean-ups of the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands have already taken place this year and Pure Mile groups are transforming this environmentally sensitive area, an area which attracts thousands of visitors annually, into a litter free zone. The success of the Pure Mile in the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands is evident when in 2024 Pure had to cancel litter pick events due to lack of litter on the environment. This reduction in litter is also a result of the success of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). The DRS was introduced in February 2024 to tackle the problem of cans and plastic bottles littering our environment and many of the Pure Mile Groups have stated that it has made a noticeable difference.

The Pure Truck is on the road every day and in the first 4 months of 2025 it has already removed over 54 tonnes (54,000kg) of illegal dumping and rubbish from Wicklow/Dublin Uplands. Pure Mile Volunteers have been extremely busy cleaning up roads, verges, drains and ditches from the Wicklow/Dublin uplands. There are now over 1,000 Pure Mile roads, mountains, woodlands, valleys, forestries, car parks, pull-ins, and upland amenities, involved in the 2025 Pure Mile Project, the largest number ever since the project began in 2010.

Ian Davis, manager of Pure commented: "The Pure Mile was established in 2010, and the project has grown from 5 miles to over 1,000 miles. We have seen an increase in people reconnecting with the area they live in, or in an area they recreate, and people are becoming much more aware of the amount of litter and rub-

bish on our roadside verges, hedges, and drains. The Pure Truck has been extremely busy collecting rubbish daily, ensuring that no Pure Mile bags are left on the landscape. It's amazing the amount of litter and rubbish the Pure Mile Volunteers are removing, and on behalf of Pure I would like to thank all of them and congratulate them for their dedication in Cleaning Up The Wicklow/Dublin Uplands."

Pure is continuing to support all the Pure Mile Groups by organising further litter picks, clean-ups, anti-dumping initiatives, community projects, biodiversity and heritage projects, which will be ongoing throughout the year.

Pure provide all groups with Pure Mile signage, Pure Mile bags, Pure Mile high-vis vests, gloves, litter pickers, and the Pure Truck removes all of the rubbish collected by the groups.

Members of the public can report all incidents of illegal dumping in the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands to the Pure Office by emailing Pure at [info@pureproject.ie](mailto:info@pureproject.ie) or phone Pure on 0402 28662.

Pure is the first initiative of its kind in Ireland incorporating statutory and non-statutory organisations and stakeholders, including, the Department of Environment, Climate, and Communications, Wicklow County Council, South Dublin County Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Coillte, National Parks & Wildlife Service, and the Wicklow Uplands Council. This unique partnership initiative was established to combat illegal dumping in the Wicklow/Dublin Uplands and was officially launched in September 2006.



Friends of the South Dublin Uplands Pure Mile Team.



# Inaugural 'Celtic Tide' Youth Sail Training Arklow to Aberystwyth experience announced

*Youth of Arklow offered unique maritime and development learning experience*

A first for Arklow, the 'Celtic Tide' youth sail training experience offers 12 young people from Arklow the chance to participate in a maritime learning and youth development experience which will be remembered for a lifetime. Funded through County Wicklow Partnership, Arklow Municipal District and SSE Renewables, the initiative brings together key local stakeholders all seeking to collaborate to ensure the success of this unique venture and facilitated by Sail Training Ireland.

The 'Celtic Tide' youth sail voyage from Arklow to Aberystwyth, Wales, is scheduled to depart from Arklow Harbour on 5th August returning on 9th August 2025. This is the first time that local young people from Arklow Municipal District aged between 14 and 17 years will have the chance to participate in this unique marine learning and development experience.

Expressions of interest were circulated to post-primary schools, Youthreach, local Youth Services and through the School Completion Programme, inviting young people to indicate their interest. The initial phase of evaluation is now complete and 12 young people will be offered the opportunity to participate.

The inaugural 'Celtic Tide' experience is funded through County Wicklow Partnership via their Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, Arklow Municipal District and SSE Renewables. Sail

Training Ireland will facilitate the planning and operational elements of the voyage. The initiative is supported by a number of key local partners - all committed to playing their part in working with the funders to ensure the upcoming sail training voyage experience is a success. These partners include Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board, The Vault Youth Club, Arklow Twinning Association, Arklow Maritime Heritage CLG /Arklow Maritime Museum and Arklow Sailing Club. Marine Health Foods has also volunteered to sponsor kit for the young people participating.

Cllr Peir Leonard said: 'This is a first for Arklow. The Celtic Tide' voyage aims to foster personal development; leadership skills; promote cultural exchange and international understanding; encourage environmental stewardship and an appreciation of the marine environment. The 12 young people

aged between 14-17 years, selected to participate in this unique experience will learn about the impact of human activity on the oceans, and how to preserve and protect our coastal ecosystems. This hands-on experience will inspire a lifelong passion for ocean conservation and encourage participants to advocate for sustainable practices in their communities. I'm especially grateful to key people involved in the planning and delivery of 'Celtic Tide' including Fiona Creedon, County Wicklow Youth Officer, Jennifer Maher from Co. Wicklow Partnership and Cindy Offer from Sail Training Ireland'.

Jennifer Maher, SICAP Manager, County Wicklow Partnership noted: 'County Wicklow Partnership is proud to support this sail training initiative through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). This offers young people an opportunity to engage in structured, inclusive



At the launch of the Celtic Tide Youth Sail Training initiative were Brian Carty (CEO, County Wicklow Partnership), Cllr Peir Leonard, Jennifer Maher (SICAP Manager, CWP), Alvina Brehony (Arklow Municipal District Administrator), Brendan Dillon (SSE Renewables), Cathaoirleach of Arklow Municipal District Cllr Pat Kennedy, Deirdre Keogh (SSE Renewables), Leonora Earls (Director of Services, Wicklow County Council), Cllr Miriam Murphy, Liz Wall (Chairperson, CWP), and Cllr Pat Fitzgerald.

activities that promote personal growth, informal learning, and skills development. By participating, they can enhance their educational outcomes and explore pathways to further education and employment, aligning with SICAP's mission to empower individuals and foster social inclusion.'

Deirdre Keogh, Com-

munity Engagement Manager on SSE's Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 offshore project commented: 'SSE Renewables is delighted to come on board as a key contributing sponsor of the upcoming 'Celtic Tide' youth sail training voyage. The sponsorship request matched several of our key funding criteria

including projects that are engaged in enjoying or preserving the marine environment and its local heritage, youth skills' development, sustainability learning, and social inclusion.

Aberystwyth, like Arklow, has a proud nautical tradition and its fitting that the voyage links both twinned towns. A

first for Arklow, the voyage and learning experience will be one to remember for those young people who take part. We're grateful to the individuals and groups that have come together to make this happen under the stewardship of Cllr Peir Leonard. There's much to do in the meantime and

we wish everyone involved, organisers and participants alike, the very best in the lead up to the voyage in early August'.

For details on the SSE Renewables Arklow Bank 2 Sponsorship Fund contact Deirdre Keogh, Community Engagement Manager by phone 087 1822587 or email deirdre.keogh@sse.com

## National campaign launched to support local Wicklow sports clubs

Performance brand Grenade has launched its latest campaign - 'Join the Revolution' - a nationwide initiative aimed at supporting grassroots sports across Ireland. As part of the campaign, Grenade will sponsor kits for 20 sports teams, offering them full branded kits, product hampers, and custom team banners to supercharge their community spirit and performance.



Andrew Porter.

Fronting the campaign is Irish rugby player Andrew Porter, Grenade ambassador. Porter, known for his powerhouse performances on the field and his advocacy for mental health, is lending his voice to support local clubs that are often the heartbeat of Irish towns and communities.

The initiative is open to teams of all shapes and sizes, from GAA teams in rural towns to urban fitness groups, rugby clubs, soccer squads, and community gyms, promoting inclusivity, participation, and healthy living at a community level.

"Growing up in Ireland, local sports clubs were everything," said Andrew Porter. "They're not just places to train or compete - they're safe spaces, they build friendships, they boost confidence, and they provide incredible mental health benefits. I've seen firsthand how being part of a team can positively shape someone's life."

The 'Join the Revolution' campaign reinforces Grenade's mission to fuel active lifestyles and empower everyday athletes. Winning teams will receive:

- A full Grenade-branded kit for their team
- A supply of Grenade protein products
- A personalised club or team banner to showcase their win

Entries for the campaign are now open and will run until 29th June 2025. Teams can submit their application by scanning the QR code in-store, or visiting [www.grenade.com/pages/join-the-revolution-ie](http://www.grenade.com/pages/join-the-revolution-ie).



Twelve top British golf tour operators recently attended 'Golf in Ireland', a B2B golf workshop and networking event organised by Tourism Ireland in Edinburgh this week - where they met, and did business with, 14 golf and tourism companies from Ireland, including Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort. The aim of the event was to highlight Ireland's world-class golf and tourism offering to the participating British golf tour operators. It involved a workshop of over 180 one-to-one meetings and a presentation from Tourism Ireland, as well as networking opportunities - providing an excellent platform for the golf and tourism companies from Ireland to showcase and sell their products and services and to negotiate business for 2025 and beyond. Pictured are Brendan Mackey, Carton House; Amy Riddell, Tourism Ireland; Joe Banks, Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort; and Joe Murphy, Failte Ireland, at Tourism Ireland's 'Golf in Ireland' B2B workshop in Edinburgh.)

# Wicklow students flying the flag for the Irish language

Students from two schools in Wicklow were presented with a Gaelbhrtach (Irish flag) at a ceremony in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, recently. Art competitions, quizzes, cioral comhra, biongo tri Ghaeilge and music sessions are just some of the activities set up and run by student committees in Wicklow that were recognised for their promotion of the Irish language.

Run by Gael Linn, 'Gaelbhrtach' is a national initiative that encourages primary and secondary school students to speak Irish outside of the formal classroom setting. Students from Wicklow

attended the ceremony which marked the 11th year of the scheme in post-primary schools.

A total of 130 flags have been awarded to post-primary schools this year - almost double the

figure from last year. Flags were awarded in recognition of students' efforts to inspire and empower their school communities to speak Irish.

Wicklow schools

Colaiste Bhride, Carnew and Woodbrook College, Bray were awarded a Gaelbhrtach in Limerick this week.

Commenting on the awards, Edel Ni Bhraonain, Bainisteoir Gaelbhrtach said: "Gaelbhrtach gives young people of any age or background the opportunity to use and develop their Irish language skills outside of the traditional classroom setting. The programme aims to put the student voice at the centre of their learning through the Gaelbhrtach committee. The student-led committee plays a central role in guiding Gaelbhrtach initiatives throughout the school year, empowering students in Wicklow to take active ownership of their



Photographed at the Gaelbhrtach awards ceremony was the coiste Gaelbhrtach from Woodbrook College.



Photographed at the Gaelbhrtach awards ceremony was the coiste Gaelbhrtach from Colaiste Bhride, Carnew.

language use and learning while promoting Irish in meaningful, self-directed ways.

"The scheme is going

from strength to strength, with 65 schools being awarded a flag for the first time this year. It's inspiring to see young people's

growing passion for the language. The most rewarding part of the scheme is hearing feedback from both students

and teachers about how they've woven the language into their daily lives and the positive impact it has made."

## Greystones Holyhead Twinning Partnership remains strong

The Greystones/Holyhead Twinning Partnership was back in action in May. St. David's Secondary School is twinned with a secondary school in Holyhead, and the Holyhead students from Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern Choir travelled to Greystones for the Live on the Seafront concert.

The concert was a showcase of the musical talent at St. David's Secondary School. The invited choir from Holyhead received a warm welcome on the night. The Holyhead students performed beautifully and were a superb addition to the evening's

programme. This twinning event allowed students from both schools to share stories and experiences. The Greystones / Holyhead Twinning Partnership continues with a Holyhead group coming to visit. They will celebrate thirteen years of

twinning with Greystones Municipal District Cathaoirleach Cllr Tom Fortune. Cllr Fortune signed the original twinning documents in 2012.

A Greystones cohort will travel to Holyhead for their Annual Holyhead Festival in July. A

sporting twinning event is also being planned, and the Holyhead Santa will be returning in November for the switching on of the Greystones Christmas lights, along with the Holyhead Male Voice Choir.

Cllr. Stephen Stokes says: "Greystones Municipal District celebrates our Holyhead Twinning Partnership, with its continued success. Over thirteen years of learning from each other. A new generation has now become involved, with many more activities to come in the future."

The Greystones Municipal District Twinning & Tourism Committee consists of councillors Mark Barry, Tom Fortune, Louise Gaskin and Stephen Stokes.



## Wicklow graduate empowers students to explore green skills for a sustainable energy

Suzanne Jackson from Baltinglass, Wicklow shares her experience of working with students in Ellenfield Community College in Whitehall, Dublin as part of Business in the Community Ireland and the EirGrid graduate programme.

**Talented graduate, Suzanne Jackson is empowering students to explore green skills, build confidence and consider subjects for their future studies and careers while working with operator and developer of Ireland's electricity grid, EirGrid.**

Over the course of the school year, monthly workshops are held with second-year students from Ellenfield Community College, covering topics such as renewable energy, sustainability awareness, areas of study and presentation skills.

Students are encouraged to think critically about environmental issues and the variety of ways they can make a difference, and making a difference was very much on display at Dollymount Strand in Dublin recently, where EirGrid staff and students from the college undertook a beach clean up.

Suzanne, a business studies graduate of Dublin City University has

been working with the students in addition to her other work on the EirGrid graduate programme and her MSc in Sustainability and Enterprise in UCC.

"As a graduate who found my passion in sustainability, I am delighted to be able to share with students the opportunities in this space, both in school, through hobbies and into potential careers."

"It is important to foster a sense of responsibility and empowerment to the younger generation so they can make choices towards a cleaner, more sustainable future."

This year marks the twelfth year of partnership between EirGrid and Ellenfield Community College,

providing students with ongoing support and guidance throughout the academic year.

"I believe in the power of knowledge and confidence and each session is designed to be interactive, engaging and offer the students plenty of opportunity to ask questions and contribute."

Facilitated through the Action on Education Programme with Business in the Community Ireland, an organisation supporting sustainable change in Irish business, the programme sees EirGrid graduates work with students from the north Dublin secondary school, helping to address equal access to information around education and employment.



Suzanne Jackson (second from right) with EirGrid colleagues and Ellenfield Community College students at a recent beach clean up at Dollymount Strand, Dublin.

# Young Wicklow change-makers celebrated at 2025 Young Social Innovators Awards

Next generation change-makers from Wicklow were celebrated at the recent 2025 national Young Social Innovators (YSI) Awards for their outstanding YSI projects that tackle important social issues such as democratic engagement amongst young people, academic grading systems and community engagement.

Three teams from Wicklow, who have taken part in the YSI programme in their secondary schools, were among 42 teams from across Ireland shortlisted for the 2025 Awards.

Two of the Wicklow teams received awards at a special ceremony on 13th May in the Aviva Stadium, which was attended by special guest, Minister Jerry Buttimer, and emceed by John Sharpson, presenter of RTE's Home School Hub.

The awarded Wicklow teams were from St David's Holy Faith Secondary, Greystones, who won an Advocacy Award for their 'Get Voting' project which aims to increase democratic engagement amongst the younger generation by designing a political education curriculum which could be used in schools around Ireland.

Students from Colaiste Bhride Carnew won the Spirit of YSI Award for their 'Take a Stand, Change the Band' project, which saw them tackle challenges they identified with the junior cert grading system, which they believe is failing them.

The shortlisted Wicklow team was from Wicklow Youthreach, Wicklow town for their 'Age Grow Evolve' project

which focuses on documenting and sharing stories of Wicklow town's older residents by placing QR codes in public spaces to make local history interactive and accessible.

Commenting on the high standard of projects shortlisted for the 2025 YSI Awards, CEO of YSI, Roger Warnock, said: "The cutting-edge social issues being addressed in the projects shortlisted for the 2025 YSI Awards, including from Wicklow, and the young people's commitment to finding solutions demonstrates how important social innovation education is for empowering our young people. I'd like to congratulate all the young people who have taken part on the remarkable passion, dedication, resourcefulness and creativity they have brought to their participation in our YSI programme in their school."

Young Social Innovators is a non-profit organisation that believes in the power of youth. Its vision is to empower, equip and inspire young people to change the world for good. Through its programmes, training and events, Young Social Innovators enables young people to grapple with difficult social issues, advocating ref-

orm and advancing change. Each year, circa 15,000 young people are supported to explore social issues that concern them and come up with a variety of responses to these. In this way, Young Social Innovators builds social capital and helps young people create a fairer and more caring Ireland.

For more information about Young Social Innovators, see [www.youngsocialinnovators.ie](http://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie).



Students from St David's Holy Faith Secondary School, who won an Advocacy Award for their 'Get Voting' project which aims to increase democratic engagement amongst the younger generation.



Students from Colaiste Bhride Carnew, who won the Spirit of YSI Award for their 'Take a Stand, Change the Band' project, which saw them tackle challenges they identified with the junior cert grading system.



Students from Coláiste Ráithín received an honourable mention for their video reel on fast fashion at the Young Reporters of the Environment Awards.

## Coláiste Ráithín students receive honourable mention at Young Reporters of the Environment Awards

An Taisce has announced that students from Coláiste Ráithín received an honourable mention for their video reel on fast fashion at the Young Reporters of the Environment Awards.

This short-form campaign video is a welcome addition to the competition this year and aims to raise awareness of an issue, promote certain values, and/or inspire positive action through live images. Through the YRE programme, young reporters can test and develop their video skills, creating impactful content that addresses environmental issues.

"In Ireland, 110,000 tonnes of textiles end up in landfill each year. We had a great film that was as Gaelic that also projected the impacts that fast fashion can cause to the environment," said directors Kitty and Maria.

The video contains powerful imagery that depicts the growing global issue of fast fashion.

The YRE competition is a leadership programme open to students aged 11-25 who are invited to share their environ-

mental perspectives through an article, photograph, or video.

A total of 50 Green-Schools signed up for the programme which launched last September.

Following the alarming need for urgent action, YRE recommends that students investigate local environmental issues linked to the following three themes; Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss and Environmental Pollution. Under strict criteria, the students task was to identify and research a local environmental issue in their area, propose solutions and communicate their findings to the community. The criteria also directs each student to evaluate how these local issues feed into the bigger global picture by linking in with the SDG's.

YRE project manager, Claire McDonald said, "The YRE competition empowers young people to take an informed stand on local

environmental issues and gives them a platform to articulate these via written article, photography or video. The standard of entries were exceptionally high this year and our judges were overwhelmed with the positive actions and solutions put forward by the students."

Students were awarded a framed certificate along with their prizes and vouchers up to the value of €2,000 cumulatively at a national awards ceremony in Hotel Kilkenny on May 15th.

The overall winners in each category have a chance of being recognised on a global scale with publication on the International YRE exposure website and entry into the International award. Two Irish entries have been nominated for the YRE international award in which 43 countries compete. Winners will be announced this month.



Eilish Fisher.

# Wicklow author shines with double win at KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards

Debut author Eilish Fisher from Wicklow has picked up the KPMG Book of the Year Award for her novel, 'Fia and the Last Snow Deer' at the 35th KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. The verse novel, which is set in pre-historic Ireland, tells the story of thirteen-year-old Fia and her beloved snow deer Solas, was also awarded the Eilis Dillon Prize celebrating Fisher's outstanding debut children's book.

Speaking at the awards, Eilish Fisher author said: "I'm deeply honoured to receive these awards. As a debut author, it's incredibly moving to see Fia and the Last Snow Deer resonate with both judges and readers around the country. Knowing that so many young readers connected with Fia's story means more to me than I can say. I'm grateful beyond words - and so proud to be part of Ireland's vibrant children's literature community."

Announced by host Rick O'Shea at a ceremony held in Merrion Square, in partnership with International Literature Festival Dublin, a total of six awards were presented to Irish authors and illustrators, who will also receive a total prize-fund of €16,000.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Elaina Ryan, CEO of Children's Books Ireland said: "Thirty-five years on, these awards continue to recognise the incredible and enduring talent we have on this island. It's such an honour to come together each year and celebrate the many Irish artists creating quality books and unforgettable stories for children and young people."

"Choosing from a shortlist of just ten books that represent the rich diversity of titles published by Irish authors and illustrators, was an enormous challenge and I want to extend a huge thanks to our committed judges whose passion for contemporary Irish children's literature is instrumental in bringing this event to life. These shortlisted books

have been enjoyed across Ireland by 11,645 young people involved in this year's Junior Juries' programme and will undoubtedly bring so much joy for years to come to readers of every age."

Ryan McCarthy Managing Partner KPMG in Ireland said: "Congratulations to all our winners and special congratulations to nine-year-old Ned McCarthy from St. Patrick's De La Salle Boys National School in Kilkenny, winner of this year's Reading Hero Award. Ned was nominated by his teacher Lucy Schneider and has shown just how much fun and enjoyment can come from reading - Ned really epitomises what the Reading Hero Award is all about."

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

Damian Smyth, joint Head of Literature and Drama at the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, said: "These awards pay tribute to some of the most fantastically talented writers and illustrators producing new work on the island of Ireland today. The stories they create cross lands and seas, to shape and ignite the minds and hearts of young audiences across the globe. We send our congratulations to all of this year's worthy winners."

## Cruinniú na nÓg: A festival of participation and performance

Cruinniú na nÓg, the National Day of Creativity for children and young people, returns to County Wicklow on Saturday, 7th June 2025. A flagship initiative of Creative Ireland's 'Creative Youth Plan', Cruinniú na nÓg aims to enable, celebrate and encourage the creative potential of young people through creative activities.

This year's program features a diverse and extensive line-up of events, activities and workshops designed to inspire and delight. All events and activities are free, though some may require pre-booking.

The theme for this year is 'Unleash Your Creative Spark!' Attendees can look forward to seeing children and young people engage in music, dance and song performances, as well as participate in creative workshops throughout the county.

More than 30 events, performances, and work-

shops will take place in twelve locations across the county, including:

- Mr. Sands Youth Theatre: will host an open day drama session at Wolfe Tone Community Centre, Bray, where children can play games, interact with theatre members and experience the excitement of youth theatre first hand.
- Music Generation in Rathdrum (RDA) Hall: This venue will showcase two special performances by local children, featuring original poetry and music created during workshops with poet Colm Keegan. The premiere of 'Rathdrum

Rhapsody' by composer Fionn Foley will also take place.

- Arklow Music and Arts at Arklow Library: will be in the Arklow Library, facilitating workshops promoting various aspects of the arts for young people for young people, including song, music, dance and drama.
- Dunlavin Library: A Gothic Fiction Creative Writing workshop with author Caroline Busher will allow children to explore how classic gothic novels influence children's books and learn to create a gothic atmosphere by

focusing on setting and character development.

- Enniskerry Library: A Musical Theatre session with Roisin Bullock will have children learning a dance routine and singing together as a group.
- The Courthouse Arts Centre: This venue will facilitate 'Atmosphere', a musical workshop led by Irish/Dutch singing duo Juliana and Remco, where children will collaborate to create a song before performing at the end of the workshop.
- To celebrate 'Creative Places Baltinglass', Wicklow County Council's

Arts Office has curated a unique Cruinniú na nÓg program for Baltinglass. This includes 'Giant Dreams', an enchanted performance featuring magical music and dancing fairies, along with local students and a special guest. Other local artists will lead workshops and activities, such as BubbleEire's Bubble Show, the Battle of the Baltinglass Fairies, an open painting workshop, and an Archaeology Egg Excavation. Performances will also include the Gohery School of Irish Dancing, the Slaney Court Drummers and local rising star Fionn Whelan. All activities will be held in the beautiful surroundings of the Tearmann Community Garden. Later that evening, 'Cinema Night', a local youth-led initiative, will screen 'Sing Street' and showcase the winner of the West Wicklow Short Movie Competition at The Lalor Centre.

14-year-old singer-songwriter Fionn Whelan is Co. Wicklow's ambassador for Cruinniú na nÓg 2025. He began playing the bodhrán and tin whistle at age five, picked up the guitar two years later, and buses on Grafton Street whenever he can. Fionn's creative hero is Ed Sheeran, and he had the opportunity to perform at Ed Sheeran's concert in the Czech Republic in 2024.

Fionn believes creativity is about "expressing yourself in your own way and using your imagina-



Fionn Whelan. Photo credit Jason Doherty.

tion to turn your ideas into something real." When asked about the best aspect of Cruinniú na nÓg, Fionn stated, "It is giving kids an opportunity to show off their talents and creativity. A lot of the young people participating might not be experienced in performing or standing in front of a crowd, and I think it's a great way to build their confidence."

Commenting on the plans for Cruinniú na nÓg, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr. Paul O'Brien, expressed his

delight in the wide range of creative activities available for children and young people to perform and participate in during this year's festival. He noted that the program is sure to ignite imagination and curiosity, and hopes many will attend and enjoy the free events and activities.

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, stated, "I am pleased that the Arts Office, in collaboration with the Library Service, local partners, and stakeholders, is presenting such

a vibrant program throughout the county. Cruinniú na nÓg is a wonderful day, and the packed schedule provides access to creative activities in a fun, inclusive, and accessible manner."

Please note that some events require advance booking while others are drop-in activities. To see the full program and details about events, including booking information, please visit: <https://cruinniun Creativeireland.gov.ie/events/location/wicklow/>



Wicklow artist Rasher (Mark Kavanagh) is pictured launching his latest exhibition 'Don't Anger the Gods' in the Flux Gallery, Dublin.

# KIAN BENSON BAILES

*Culchie boy, I love you / Grá mo chroí thú, mo chábóigín féin 21 Angels and then some...*

Curated by Sara Greavu. Mermaid Arts Centre, 26th May - 12th July.  
Opening Reception 2-4pm Saturday 24th May - All Welcome

Mermaid Arts Centre is pleased to welcome this solo exhibition by Kian Benson Bailes, curated by Sara Greavu, in this concluding iteration.

Culchie boy, I love you / Grá mo chroí thú, mo chábóigín féin is an exhibition in four parts by Kian Benson Bailes which, in its various iterations, has comprised sculpture, digital & material collage, musical instruments, ceramics, textiles, woodwork, and live sculptural sound elements.

Originally commissioned by Project Arts Centre, it references Irish folklore, mythology and craft traditions in an exuberant expression of rural queer experience.

In Mermaid Arts Centre, Kian will present a new version of this work, 21 Angels and then some... which follows on from the presentation in Limerick City Gallery, Songs from the Leeward Slope and in the Regional Cultural Centre - Letterkenny, Self-Actualiser.

21 Angels and then some... will include new ceramic sculptures and sound-producing 'instruments' which represent the culmination of a process of investigation of Irish folk traditions, songcraft, musical instrument fabrication and musical storytelling.

The ceramic instruments have been a thread running through the four iterations of the touring exhibition, with this new and final version being



the realisation of the project and the completion of three years of making and researching. Each whistle is developed in relation to the artist's own experiences of playing the tin whistle in County Sligo.

The exhibition is accompanied by a commissioned poem by Annemarie Ní Churraín that departs from the work's references to folklore and figures within Ireland's oral tradition of folktales and fairytales. It will be presented on a limited edition risograph printed poster designed by Alex Synge of The First 47, and is available

for free from the gallery.

Originally from Sligo, Kian Benson Bailes received a BA in Visual Arts Practice from IADT, Dublin in 2016 and currently lives and works in Dublin. Recent multidisciplinary work has examined Ireland's language and colonial history - as well as craft, folklore and art - to re-evaluate a sense of place and self.

His wide-ranging practice employs sculpture, digital and material collage, musical instruments, ceramics, textiles, woodwork, and live sculptural sound elements to create a complex exploration of rural

Ireland, visual language, embodied experiences in landscape, and identity.

The practice draws from Irish folklore, mythology, personal history, and queer theory "to interrogate [his] own emotional landscape as a way of reconciling place and self." Recent exhibitions include Culchie boy, I love you / Grá mo chroí thú, mo chábóigín féin at Project Arts Centre, Dublin; The Gleaners Society, 40th Edition EVA International, Limerick; and Inverts on the castle wall, Perverts in the tall grass below at Custom House Studios and Gallery, Westport.

Annemarie Ní Churraín is a poet from the Donegal Gaeltacht. Her books include Bloodroot (Doire Press, 2017), Town (The Salvage Press, 2018) and The Poison Glen (The Gallery Press, 2021). She is a recipient of the Irish Arts Council's Next Generation Artist Award and a co-recipient of The Markievicz Award. Ní Churraín has held literary fellowships in the U.S. and throughout Europe. She was the 2022-23 Decades of Centenaries Artist in Residence at Donegal County Archives and is currently Poetry Editor at The Stinging Fly Magazine.



Ellie Willoughby as Princess Fiona in Avonmore Musical Society's musical 'Shrek' in St. Mary's Hall, Arklow.

## Coming up at Mermaid Arts Centre...

### Film: Maria

Monday 9th June €10/€8. Language: English and Greek with subtitles

Maria Pablo Larrain explores who Maria Callas (Angelina Jolie) really was, away from the fame and headlines. Jolie gives a transforming performance, capturing the tumultuous, beautiful and tragic story of the life of the world's greatest female opera singer through memories, friends, and, most importantly, her singing



### Falling To Earth - My Summer With Bowie

Saturday 14th June 2025.  
€23/€20. Suitable for age 14+

Stephen Jones stars as Scut Kelly in this gripping one-man show by acclaimed playwright Eugene O'Brien. A once-in-a-lifetime encounter with his idol forces Scut to confront his dreams, his fears, and the painful reality of his past. Can he navigate this new planet of possibilities, or will he come crashing back to Earth?





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# Arklow boy celebrated as Ireland's Best Junior Baker Runner-Up

Bobby Sherwood from Arklow is being celebrated after being named runner-up of Ireland's Best Junior Baker of the Year with Gala Retail. Aged 14, Bobby's Oreo and Biscoff Cupcakes, impressed the judges, earning him the runners-up title and a €500 prize.

The competition, launched earlier this year, called on amateur bakers from across the country to share their best home-baked creations, showcasing the talent and passion for baking that exists in homes, kitchens, and communities throughout Ireland.

Organised by convenience group, Gala Retail, the final was held during a live bake-off event at Airfield Estate in Dundrum, Dublin, with a judging panel led by much-loved baking expert Catherine Leyden and TikTok baking star Alice Kelly, and the winners announced on Ireland AM.

Joining Bobby in the junior bake-off final were Elena Clarke from Foxford, Co. Mayo, with her traditional brown bread and Leah Mallinson who impressed the judges with her vanilla cupcakes topped with white chocolate Swiss meringue buttercream and fondant decorations, earning her the Junior Baker of the Year title and a €1,500 prize.

Mary Buckley from Rathcoole, Co. Cork, won the overall title of Best Baker and a €3,000 prize with her hand-made scones. Joining Mary were Mark Daly Williams from Dublin, who impressed with his parsnip and orange olive oil muffins, and Chloe Lynch from Dundalk, Co. Louth, who presented a rich and indulgent chocolate and Guinness pie.

Each finalist received €500 in recognition of their impressive baking skills. This year's Ireland's Best Baker competition received entries from across the country, with categories ranging from scones and muffins to cupcakes, breads, tarts, and traybakes. Over €6,500 in prizes was awarded as part of the initiative to celebrate local talent and foster a sense of community through baking.



Gary Desmond, CEO of Gala Retail, with Ireland's Best Junior Baker Runner-Up 14-year-old Bobby Sherwood, and TikTok baking star Alice Kelly.

## RECRUITMENT



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### POIST MHÚINTEOIREACHTA IARBHUNSCOILE – GACH ÁBHAIR

a d'fhéadfadh teacht chun cinn ón 1 Meán Fómhair 2025 ina 23 Iarbhunscoil ar fud Chontaetha Chill Dara agus Chill Mhantáin.

Gach eolas ar fail ó [www.etbvacancies.ie](http://www.etbvacancies.ie) agus ar KWETB gréasáin: <https://kildarewicklow.etb.ie/post-primary-teaching-vacancies>

An dáta deiridh le hiarratais chomhlánaithe ar líne a fháil: 12 meán ar an Máirt 17ú Meitheamh 2025.

An Dr. Deirdre Nic Aoidh, Príomhfheidhmeannach.

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board invites applications from suitably qualified persons for:

### POST PRIMARY TEACHING POSTS – ALL SUBJECTS

which may arise from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 in its 23 Post Primary Schools across Counties Kildare and Wicklow.

All details are available at [www.etbvacancies.ie](http://www.etbvacancies.ie) and on the KWETB website: <https://kildarewicklow.etb.ie/post-primary-teaching-vacancies>

Closing date for receipt of completed online applications: 12 noon on Tuesday 17th June 2025.

Dr. Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive.

## Wicklow duo stunned by EuroMillions raffle win

A syndicate from Co. Wicklow is celebrating a life-enhancing surprise after their EuroMillions Ireland-Only Raffle ticket turned a modest €5,000 prize into a startling €255,000 windfall!

The winning ticket, purchased at Gallagher's SuperValu on Wentworth Street in Wicklow Town, was part of the special EuroMillions Ireland-Only Raffle draw on Tuesday, 13th May.

This month-long raffle event is giving players across Ireland the chance to win an extra €250,000 on top of the usual €5,000 raffle prize, every Tuesday and Friday for all nine draws.

The Wicklow winners, a syndicate of two, had no idea what was in store when they went to check their ticket. "Our internet was acting up, so we just drove to the shop to scan it," one of the winners explained. "The assistant handed us a sticky note with the National Lottery's number and said, 'You'd better call them'. We thought something was wrong! What came next was total disbelief. I was on the phone to Martin from the Prize Claims team and just blurted out, 'Just tell me how much I've won', expecting to hear €5,000, not €255,000!"

Now, with their unexpected windfall, the duo is planning a long-overdue holiday abroad. "We haven't been away in years. We've always wanted to explore Italy, drive along the Amalfi Coast and relax by Lake Garda. This is our sign to finally do it!"



### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

#### FULL PLANNING PERMISSION Sought for:

1. Construction of 4 No. 1 Bed Apartments & 2 No. 2 Bed Apartments over 3 storeys with penthouse to top floor.
2. Retail/Commercial Unit at Ground Floor (48Msq).
3. New Internal Bike/Bin Storage and all ancillary site works at Mill Lane, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Signed: HX Properties.

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

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Ray Of Sunshine Morning And Afterschool, seek planning permission for an intensification of use to the existing childcare / afterschool building granted permission Reg Ref 23/387. The development will consist of an increase in the capacity to provide afterschool services to a maximum of (119 persons inclusive of staff), new building signage, alterations to door exits together with all associated site development works at Ray Of Sunshine Morning And Afterschool, No. 91 Burkeen Dales, Hawkstown Road, Wicklow 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.

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

We, Dale & Phil Cross are applying to Wicklow County Council for Full Planning Permission for the change of use from existing detached garage to a playroom to be used as extra area ancillary to the enjoyment of the existing dwelling and for the retention of a single storey workshop to the rear of the property and all associated site works at Johnstown Avenue, Johnstown, Kilpedder, Co. Wicklow, A63 X294.

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

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION Sought for: 1. Proposed Change of Use of 1 of 4 No. Existing Astro Football Pitches to 1 No. Padel Court complete with Proposed Covered All Weather Enclosure. 3 No. Astro Football Pitches retained.

2. All ancillary site works at Shoreline Leisure, Bray Swimming Pool and Sports Centre, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow. A98 F585.

Signed: Bray Swimming Pool Sports and Leisure Centre Ltd T/A Shoreline Leisure Bray. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Barry Brennan seeks planning for a Mixed-Use Commercial / Building. The development will consist of a new commercial building circa 298 msq, that contains the following: (1 No.) Café/Restaurant Unit, (1 No.) Retail Unit at ground floor. (2 No.) Co-Working office units at first floor, an extension of the existing carpark / outdoor, amenity areas, bicycle parking, a new packaged effluent disposal system Biofilter with partially raised sand polishing filter to current EPA standards all together with associated site development works at Ballynacarrig, Brittas Bay, County 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.

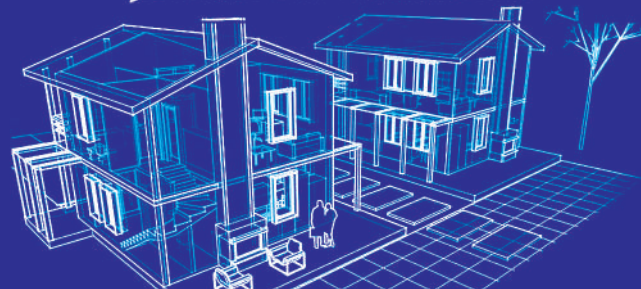
### WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Eva Lynch, intend to apply for outline planning permission for development at Preban, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow, Y14 F627. The proposed development will consist of: (1). A change of use from an existing single-storey ancillary workshop (55sqm) to a single-storey dwelling, with ancillary site works and appropriate wastewater treatment system. (2). A single-storey extension (40sqm) to the east elevation. 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.

## ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

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# Rathnew company at National Enterprise Awards

Rathnew business JTM Energy (GP Power Professionals Ltd.), who is supported by the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Wicklow, represented County Wicklow at this year's National Enterprise Awards.

The awards, which took place on Thursday, 22nd May at the Round Room of the Mansion House in Dublin, are in their 25th year and are organised annually by the Local Enterprise Offices nationwide.

Awards were presented by Alan Dillon T.D., Minister of State for Employment, Small Business and Retail, while MC Bryan Dobson presided over events. Attendees included the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executives of the Local Authorities, Heads of Enterprise and staff of LEOs nationwide and the founders and staff of the competing businesses.

The LEO Wicklow awards nominee, JTM Energy design and manufacture battery energy-storage systems for both commercial and domes-

tic customers. Their biggest market at present is the construction sector, where they provide silent, emission-less generators.

The Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Emer O'Gorman, said, "I would like to thank Shaun, Don and Frank and all the team at JTM Energy in Rathnew for representing Co. Wicklow so well at the NEAs in 2025. They put in a huge amount of work during the application and judging process. This work ethic is evident in the commercial success they have had to date. To have a business that is such a pioneer in the sustainability space

is particular honour for Co. Wicklow. We wish them good luck into the future."

Head of Enterprise at LEO Wicklow, Vibeke Delahunt thanked JTM Energy for an excellent job representing Co. Wicklow, saying "All of the team at LEO Wicklow are so happy for the staff of JTM Energy. Their hard work and innovation has seen them grow in recent years, and they embody the entrepreneurial spirit of Co. Wicklow so well."

The overall winner at the National Enterprise Awards was Spry International Ltd. who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Mon-

aghan. The company has created an AI patient care system that eliminates inefficiencies in patient appointments.

The National Enterprise Awards has been organised by LEO staff for the past 25 years. Since their inception, the Local Enterprise Offices have helped create over 80,000 jobs across the country. The LEOs work with thousands of client companies across Ireland in a diverse range of sectors offering mentoring, training, expert advice and financial supports to small businesses. For more information see [www.LocalEnterprise.ie/wicklow](http://www.LocalEnterprise.ie/wicklow).



Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise, LEO Wicklow; Michelle Hegarty, Business Advisor, LEO Wicklow; Donna Core, JTM Energy; Shaun Mc Namara, JTM Energy; Jim Treacy, JTM Energy; Louise Fleming, Senior Enterprise Development Officer, LEO Wicklow; Don Coughlan, JTM Energy.



Carol Smith, Nicola McFaull and Neasa Clissmann at the recent official launch of Avoca's Mill Tours in Avoca.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19

Do not think that I have come to annul the law and the prophets. I have not come to annul them, but to fulfil them. I tell you this: as long as heaven and earth last, not the smallest letter or dot in the law will change, until all is fulfilled. So then, whoever breaks the least important of these commandments and teaches others to do the same, will be the least in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, whoever obeys them and teaches other to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven.

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Camp 2: Wicklow Town	July 7th - 11th	12.30 - 3.30pm
Camp 3: Enniskerry	July 14th - 18th	9am - 12 noon
Camp 4: Enniskerry	July 14th - 18th	12.30 - 3.30pm

East Glendalough School, Wicklow Town and The Schoolhouse for Art Enniskerry

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