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Tuesday 27th May 2025 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

'SHOCKING AND UNBELIEVABLE'

The crisis in accessing disability supports for children has reached breaking point in Wicklow, with public representatives from across the county condemning the Government for failing to deliver timely Assessments of Need (AON) and breaching legal obligations.

Figures obtained this month show that 854 children in East Wicklow and 1,692 in West Wicklow/Kildare are currently waiting for assessments, a combined total of over 2,500 children in Wicklow. These assessments, required by law to be carried out within six months, are essential in determining a child's needs and securing access to therapies and education supports.

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore raised the issue forcefully in the Dáil last week, saying the Government's failure was leaving children "in limbo" and families in crisis. "Each one of these 15,296 children on the national waiting list represents a life on hold," she said. "In Wicklow, that means more than 2,500 children caught in a system that acknowledges the problem but

refuses to fix it. These are not just statistics, these are families in crisis due to years of government inaction." Whitmore warned that even for children who do receive an AON, access to therapies remains severely delayed. She cited the case of a young boy diagnosed with autism who now faces a four-year wait for vital support. "These therapies aren't optional, they are



The completion of the Great Sugarloaf Restoration Project was officially marked last week. See page 6.

SOFA SCRAPPAGE SCHEME

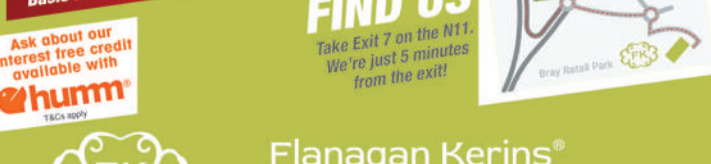
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essential," she said. "We're five months into 2025, and the HSE expects that 25,000 children will be on the waiting list by year-end. That is utterly unacceptable."

Sinn Féin TD John Brady, chair of the Public Accounts Committee, accused the Government of breaking the law. "The Disability Act clearly states that a child must receive an assessment within six months. Yet 93% of assessments now breach that timeframe," he said. "That is not just failure, it is dereliction of duty."

Brady said the system is so broken that families are now being forced to fight "tooth and nail" for both assessments and the services that follow. "This is a system in crisis, one that is failing the very people who rely on it most."

He joined Whitmore in praising the courage of 14-year-old disability advocate Cara Darmody, who held a 50-hour vigil outside the Dáil to raise awareness of the AON crisis. "Cara is doing more to highlight this issue than the Government themselves. Her bravery should shame those in power into action."

Sinn Féin TD Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin, who represents Wicklow-Wexford, drew on his 34 years of experience as a primary teacher in special education to describe the toll the delays are taking on families.

"This government has failed the children of Ireland yet again," he said. "The law requires assessments within six months, and they are simply not happening. The result is undue stress on families and

delayed development for children."

Ó Súilleabháin said

the Wicklow/Kildare HSE area now has 2,314 children waiting,

the highest figure outside Dublin.

Continued on page 3

COFFEE MORNING

Join us at Moneystown Community Hall, A98 P9Y9 Sunday 1st June 2025 from 10:30am to 1:30pm for a warm and welcoming coffee morning in support of PWSAI (Prader-Willi Syndrome Association Ireland)

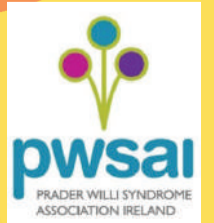
Stella Leonard, Moneystown - who lives with Prader-Willi Syndrome - a rare and complex genetic condition - has received incredible support from PWSAI. This event is our way of giving back and helping other families who rely on their vital work.

Pop in for a cuppa, enjoy some fruit, cake and share in the community spirit - all while supporting a great cause.



Lets make a difference together.

We'd love to see you there!



Raffle on the day with fantastic prizes!

Holy Rosary Soup & Sandwiches

Looking for somewhere different for lunch? Then come along to Kilian House Family Centre in Greystones on Wednesday 28th May for some good food in a friendly atmosphere. From 12.15pm to 2pm. Suggested Donation €7. Proceeds go to local charities.

Greystones Flower Club

The next meeting of Greystones Flower Club will take place this Tuesday 27th May, 8pm, The Evangelical Church Hall, Hillside Road, Greystones. Demonstrators will be Ms Marie Laird and Roisin Graham. Non- members very welcome. €10 admission or €35 for yearly membership. Tea/ Coffee served at end of meeting.

Pilgrim Walks

Following the tradition of pilgrimage, a series of walks has been organised for Saturday 31st May to mark St. Kevin's Day in Glendalough. Participants will walk towards Glendalough following a choice of 8 different routes which will merge along the way with other walkers from the same area.

Area A: Route 1 Glenmalur: Leader: Carmel O'Toole 087 4165298; **Route 2:** Ballinabarney /Greenane Leaders: Sean Dunne 086 8937650, Jimmy Devitt 087 7832870.

Area B: Route 3: Annamoe: Leader: Robbie Carter 085 8118198; **Route 4:** Glenmacnass: Leader: Ann Nolan 086 0851665

Area C: Route 5: Trooperstown Leader: Andrew Doyle 086 8370088; **Route 6:** Clara Vale Leader: Ann O'Brien 085 1102220; **Route 7:** Rathdrum Leader: Anne Savage 087 7936818

Area D: Route 8: Wicklow Gap Leader: Sr Breda Ahearn 087 2446601.

If you're thinking of walking all you need to do is to pick one of the routes and then contact the group leader who will give you the details on the route's length, starting time, location, etc. Each person will walk all or part of their chosen route finishing with a gathering of walkers sharing refreshments at the Hermitage Centre near St Kevin's Church, Laragh after 2pm.

Team Stella Coffee Morning to support families living with rare genetic disorder

Moneytown residents are rallying behind a local family this June Bank Holiday weekend as they host a special coffee morning to raise funds for the Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Ireland (PWSAI).

The Team Stella Coffee Morning will take place on **Sunday, 1st June at Moneytown Community Hall**, offering a chance to enjoy a warm cuppa, meet friendly faces, and support a heart-felt cause - all in aid of children and families living with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS).

PWS is a rare genetic condition caused by missing or faulty genes on chromosome 15. It affects around 100 people in Ireland and can lead to a range of serious challenges, including constant hunger, developmental delays, low muscle tone, short stature, and behavioural difficulties. While there is currently no cure, early intervention and therapies can significantly improve quality of life.

The organisers of the event are parents from the Moneytown area whose daughter, Stella, lives with PWS.

"She's the most amazing 8-year-old little lady," they said. "We're part of a small but incredibly supportive community, and we'd love to welcome people in from near and far to be part of this special day."

Alongside coffee, cake and communi-

ty spirit, the day will feature a raffle packed with fantastic prizes - from hotel stays to family passes and beauty goodies.

Some of the Raffle Prizes Include:

- Tickets to see comedian Danny O'Brien
- Vouchers for Boots, The Green Room Florist, and King Hair
- Passes to Clara Lara, Beyond the Trees, K2Alpacas, and Dublin Zoo
- Annual Pass to Powerscourt Gardens
- Overnight stays at the Celtic Ross Hotel in West Cork and The Brehon

Hotel in Killarney

- An online cookery course with Catherine Fulvio
- Plus many more local and national prizes being added daily

Raffle tickets are available now via WhatsApp or text to 086 348 7175, or can be purchased on the day.

"It's our first ever Team Stella Coffee Morning, and we're not quite sure where to begin - but we know this community always shows up," the organisers added. "Every cuppa, every raffle ticket, and every smile helps."

Bray Dads Network announces Dads & Kids Waterfight in People's Park

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

As we know Brittas Bay is a magnet for thousands of visitors year round including many bathers. Some years ago I alerted Wicklow County Council about the lack of adequate Life Buoys on the beach.

This week I noted some of the Buoys are missing or in need of Upgrading. This is a Safety issue that needs to be addressed ahead of the high season!

Frank Khan
Dublin16

The Bray Dads Network is thrilled to announce a fun-filled Dads & Kids Waterfight event at People's Park, Bray, on Sunday, June 1st, at 14:00. All dads and their children are invited to join in this exciting community event designed to create lasting memories and strengthen bonds through playful outdoor fun.

Participants are encouraged to bring water pistols, rolled-up socks as reusable water balloons, and a change of clothes for a splashing good time. This family-friendly event promises laughter, friendly competition, and a great opportunity for dads and kids to connect with others in the Bray area.

Speaking to **Wicklow Times** the founder Ciaran Hogan said "study after study has shown that outdoor rough and tumble play is fantastic for kids' development; they learn how to control them-

selves, how to work together with others, general learning ability, and family cohesion."

The Bray Dads Network is a community group dedicated to bringing dads and their children together through fun, engaging, and family-oriented activities in Bray. The group was founded by local Bray dad Ciaran Hogan in October of last year. The group aims to build connections, create memories, and support local dads in their parenting journey.

Following the success of their recent mini-hike to the top of

Bray Head, the Bray Dads Network is eager to keep the momentum going.

The Bray Dads Network warmly welcomes new members to join their vibrant community. Dads interested in getting involved can connect through the group's Facebook page or WhatsApp group, where they can stay updated on upcoming events and activities.

For more information, please contact the Bray Dads Network via their Facebook page or WhatsApp group.



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Bray Dads Network members at their recent walk to the top of Bray Head.

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Billions blown, no accountability

PAC turns spotlight on Government's costliest failures

Two of the country's largest public spending controversies - the soaring cost of the National Children's Hospital and the rising bill for asylum seeker accommodation - are coming under renewed scrutiny.

Sinn Féin TD and Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) John Brady confirmed last week that the committee will begin a formal investigation in June into government spending on asylum accommodation. The inquiry will examine the performance and oversight of the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS), after it emerged that more than €1 billion was spent in 2024 on housing International Protection applicants, a 54% increase on the previous year. Combined with accommodation for Ukrainian refugees, total State spending in this area hit €1.84 billion last year, with a current daily cost averaging €5 million.

"This isn't a marginal over-spending, it's a runaway train," Brady said. "The government is throwing money at a problem it has no plan to solve, and communities across the country, including here in Wicklow, are bearing the brunt."

He pointed to failures in the processing system that leave applicants stuck in high-cost accommodation for far too long. "If applications aren't processed quickly, the cost continues to rise, and it's the taxpayer who pays the price." He also criticised the lack of trans-



Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, John Brady TD.

parency in how accommodation contracts are awarded. "In some towns, the only hotel has been taken over. This is affecting tourism and local businesses, and people are rightly asking who is making these decisions and how."

With Wicklow's tourism economy and community balance under pressure, Brady stressed the need for clear communication and

financial transparency. "Our job in the PAC is to follow the money and ask the hard questions. We need to know who's benefiting, how decisions are being made, and whether the public is getting value for money."

Meanwhile, in a fiery exchange in the Dáil last week, Aontú leader and Meath West TD Peadar Tóibín criticised Tánaiste Simon Harris over his past involvement with the National Children's Hospital project when he was Minister for Health. The hospital, originally expected to cost €700 million and open in 2020, is now forecast to exceed €2.2 billion in costs, with no confirmed opening date. The latest best-case estimate is June 2026, marking the 15th delay since the project began.

Deputy Tóibín accused the Tánaiste of denying responsibility for the runaway costs: "Your fingerprints are all over the additional €1.5 billion. That money could have built over 4,000 homes and housed more people than are currently homeless in Ireland today," he said. He claimed that the original contract was poorly designed and lacked proper oversight, comparing the Tánaiste's evasiveness to "an estate agent trying to sell an

overpriced hospital to an increasingly angry public."

Speaking locally, Aontú representative for Wicklow, Ciarán Hogan, added his voice to the growing anger, describing the situation as "both immoral and scandalous."

"I want to make it clear the shame should be cast not only on

Mr Harris, but on the entire Fine Gael apparatus that allowed this level of incompetence to 'fail upwards' for so long. Every Fine Gael minister and councillor should carry the shame of an organisation that burned through billions of taxpayer money - money that could have gone into housing, healthcare and the public

services we don't have today.

"I hope this comes as a wake-up call to the people of Ireland, who rightfully demand an immediate and decisive change in their country's leadership. I struggle to see the difference between this level of incompetence and a hostile enemy, it is indistinguishable from malice."



Deputy John Brady and fourteen year old disability campaigner Cara Darmody outside Leinster House.

'SHOCKING AND UNBELIEVABLE'

Continued from page 1

He highlighted heartbreaking local cases, including one 10-year-old boy who waited seven years for an AON, forcing his parents to pay privately for an ASD diagnosis. The boy, who also needs a device to communicate, is still waiting for that basic support.

In another case, he described a mother in Wicklow with two sons, one of whom regularly lashes out in frustration. "The older boy is afraid to come downstairs, and the mother is terrified of the impact this will have on his mental health," he said.

Ó Súilleabháin condemned the Government for spending €8 million fighting parents in court over the AON process while failing to implement the

EPSEN Act 2004, which was intended to ensure educational supports for children with special needs.

"This is not good enough. It's shocking and unbelievable," he said. "Now, in a cynical move, the Government is trying to change the law instead of following it. Sinn Féin will continue to fight for our children until they get the assessments and support they need and deserve."

All three TDs have united in demanding urgent action, compliance with the law, and proper investment in children's disability services.

"This is not just a policy failure," Deputy Whitmore said. "It's a failure of political will. These families deserve more than words, they deserve action."

Wicklow left exposed by falling Garda numbers

Wicklow Aontú representative Ciarán Hogan has raised fresh concerns about the state of policing in Ireland, citing alarming figures showing Garda numbers in freefall and dozens of rural stations left unmanned. In a statement issued this week, Hogan highlighted what he called an "unsustainable" situation in the Wicklow-Wexford district and blamed long-term government policy and leadership failures for leaving communities underprotected and frontline gardaí demoralised.

In December 2023, then-Minister for Justice Helen McEntee defended herself against a vote of no confidence, triggered in part by the riots and looting that had rocked Dublin just weeks earlier. Speaking in the Dáil, Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín stated: "The number of gardaí has fallen since Helen McEntee became Minister for Justice, while Garda morale has collapsed."

He also highlighted that Garda recruitment had reached an all-time low and that assaults on gardaí were now a daily occurrence. Earlier that year, amid a crisis of declining Garda numbers, Minister McEntee stood by Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, even after rank-and-file gardaí delivered a 98.7% vote of no confidence in his leadership.

Figures released last week to Deputy Tóibín reveal that Garda numbers have continued to decline, with many new recruits leaving the force

within five years. This surge in early departures can be traced back to Commissioner Harris's appointment in 2018. In the years prior (2016-2017), only around 10 officers exited annually. But by 2018, that number had nearly tripled to 26, rising to 41 in 2019 and peaking at 68 in 2023-a sevenfold increase.

Over the past decade, more than 400 gardaí have left the service within five years of joining, with only a small number leaving due to dismissals or death.

Aontú research further shows the force has shrunk significantly over four years:

- 2021: 388 left, 148 joined
- 2022: 449 left, 370 joined
- 2023: 488 left, 388 joined
- 2024: 382 left, 599 joined

High turnover has resulted in a critical loss of on-the-beat experience, vital for solving crimes and progressing investiga-

tions. Unsurprisingly, morale remains low. During a recruitment drive in Dublin in 2024, a South Australian police chief inspector described the interest from Irish gardaí in transferring abroad as "overwhelming."

In the wake of the 2023 riots and the no-confidence vote, efforts were made to increase Garda visibility in Dublin. However, with overall numbers still falling, this redeployment appears to have hollowed out rural policing.

In the Dáil, Deputy Tóibín recently pressed Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan on the issue. The minister admitted that "56 Garda stations are, according to Garda figures, unmanned."

Tóibín responded: "Euphemisms and marketing bumf are no replacement for a community Garda station. The biggest disaster affecting towns and villages across the country are zombie Garda stations; 56 stations with no

Garda assigned. They are practically closed in all but name. And when the Government claims to be providing 'community bespoke vehicles', they should be charged with the crime of abusing the English language."

A Freedom of Information request submitted by local Aontú activist Ciarán Hogan revealed that just 81 sergeants and 505 gardaí are tasked with covering 24-hour shifts across the entire Wicklow-Wexford district - serving a population of 320,000.

Speaking to the *Wicklow Times*, Ciarán Hogan said: "I have family in the Garda. I know how hard it is - the shift work, late nights, endless paperwork, and on top of that, the dangerous individuals they often face. The Government doesn't respect or support our gardaí properly. I can't blame the many who've left for better conditions elsewhere. But we urgently need to fix this unsustainable situation."



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**Bí ag faire do na comharthaí foláirimh
AGUS BÍ AR d'AIRDEALL!**

Council launches new climate mitigation measures

Wicklow County Council is excited to announce the launch of two major climate mitigation initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainable transport and reducing operational emissions. These projects represent significant progress in the Council's Climate Action Plan and its commitment to a greener, cleaner future.

MOBY E-Bike Sharing Scheme Expands to Greystones

In partnership with MOBY, Wicklow County Council will officially launch a public e-bike sharing scheme in the Greystones Municipal District on Monday, 26th May 2025. This initiative brings 100 electric bikes to over 30 key locations across Greystones, including Delgany and Killinarrig. The scheme is designed to provide residents and visitors with a convenient, affordable, and sustainable transportation alternative.

The e-bike stations are

strategically located to connect town centres, public transport links, schools, sports centres, tourist attractions and residential communities. Riders can rent and return e-bikes at designated bike stands or virtual parking locations indicated in the MOBY MOVE app.

Importantly, this scheme integrates with the existing network in Bray, allowing seamless travel between the two towns and encouraging more people to choose active low-carbon transportation. MOBY's e-bikes are equipped with automatic gearing, anti-theft GPS tracking, and a long-last-

ing battery with a range of up to 70 km, making them suitable for both commuting and leisure activities.

The service will operate 24/7 with flexible pricing options, including pay-per-use. To celebrate the launch, Wicklow County Council and MOBY will offer free ride passes throughout June, encouraging the public to try the service. There are also plans to expand a similar scheme to Arklow, Wicklow Town, and Blessington in the near future.

Green Party Councillor Lourda Scott has welcomed the official launch of the Moby e-bike shar-

ing scheme in Greystones.

The launch marks the culmination of over two years of work following a motion tabled by Cllr Scott, which received full support from Wicklow County Council. Since then, Cllr Scott has been working persistently in the background with officials to ensure Greystones would be the first to be included in the phased roll-out of the scheme.

Speaking ahead of the launch, Cllr Scott said: "This is a really positive development for Greystones and I'm proud to see it become a reality after two years of sus-

tained dialogue with the Council. When I first brought this motion to council, I made the case that Greystones residents need more transport options, particularly given the hilly nature of the area and the pressure on car parking and traffic. These e-bikes are easy to use, environmentally friendly, and a great alternative for short local journeys. They also offer visitors a new and enjoyable way to explore our town and surrounding areas.

"I've been contacted many times by residents asking when the bikes would arrive, so I know there is real interest and demand. This is a very welcome option for people who may not be regular cyclists or who find the hills challenging. I will continue to monitor the scheme closely and work with the provider and council officials to ensure it operates smoothly and is well-used."

Decarbonising Council Operations with Electric Mowers

Wicklow County Council has also rolled out three 100% electric Mean Green mowers in the Greystones, Bray and Baltinglass Municipal Districts. These electric mowers, supplied by Dublin Grass Machinery mark a significant step forward in reducing emissions from public realm maintenance.

Traditional petrol mowers are noisy, require high maintenance, and emit high levels of car-



Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District Cllr. Tom Fortune, Greystones Municipal District Engineers Graham Cullen and Rory O'Hanlon with the Greystones Municipal District Maintenance team at the launch of Moby E-Mobility Bike Scheme & EV Green Machine Mower in Burnaby Park.

bon. In contrast, Mean Green Electric Mowers produce zero emissions, require less maintenance, and operate with lower noise and vibration levels - making them safer and more comfortable for operators. Notably, petrol ride-on mowers can emit up to 30 times more pollution than a car, making this transition crucial for improving local air quality and supporting climate action.

The electric mowers also eliminate the need for fuel storage and reduce servicing waste, providing both environmental and operational advantages.

A Step Towards a Greener Future

These initiatives align closely with Wicklow County Council's Climate Action Plan and the National Sustainable Mobility Policy. They demonstrate a practical, community-focused approach to reducing emissions and enhancing the quality of life throughout the county.

Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr. Tom Fortune, welcomed these develop-

ments, stating: "We are delighted to introduce these climate mitigation measures in the Greystones Municipal District. MOBY's innovative e-bike sharing scheme will enhance connectivity, reduce traffic congestion, and support our long-term goals for sustainable travel. The new electric mowers will also make a visible difference in places like Burnaby Park, where residents and visitors can enjoy a cleaner and quieter environment."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, added: "The launch of the MOBY e-bike scheme and Mean Green Electric Mowers reflects our ongoing commitment to climate action and sustainable transport. These initiatives are part of a county-wide effort to meet climate targets and improve the well-being of our communities. Through collaboration between our Municipal Districts, Active Travel Team and Climate Action Team, we are driving real change at the local level."

Theresa O'Brien, Director of Service for

Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity, commented: "These projects are a tangible example of how local government can lead by example in reducing emissions and promoting low-carbon lifestyles. By investing in clean technologies like electric mowers - and providing public access to active travel options such as e-bikes, we are not only reducing our operational footprint but also empowering our communities to engage in climate action. These are the kinds of practical, scalable solutions we need to implement across the board to build a resilient, climate-friendly future for County Wicklow."

Thomas O'Connell, CEO and Founder of MOBY, expressed his enthusiasm: "We're excited to launch our Greystones e-bike scheme, offering a smart mobility solution that provides a real alternative to private car use. Our experience operating similar schemes around Ireland ensures we can meet the unique needs of the Greystones community with a high-quality, accessible, and sustainable service."



Mark Costello and Julie Sammiller (Climate Action Team Wicklow County Council) with Aadarsh Das (Moby) and Cathaoirleach of the Greystones Municipal District Cllr. Tom Fortune.



(L to R): Andrew Richardson (Dublin Grass Machinery), Julie Sammiller (Community Climate Action Programme), Ruairi O'Hanlon (Capital Delivery Engineer), Graham Cullen (District Engineer) Keith Byrne, Aadarsh Das (Moby E-Mobility Bikes), Marc Devereux (Director of Services, Wicklow County Council), Mark Costello (Climate Action Coordinator) and Theresa O'Brien (Director of Services, Wicklow County Council), with Cllr. Tom Fortune (Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District) and Councillors Erica Doyle, Louise Fenelon Gaskin, Orla Finn, Stephen Stokes, Lourda Scott and Mark Barry.

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.

Great Sugarloaf Restoration Project officially opened

On Wednesday, 21st May, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr. Paul O'Brien officially opened the Great Sugarloaf Restoration Project. He was joined by the Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District Cllr. Dermot O'Brien, Director of Services for Wicklow County Council's CERA department Theresa O'Brien, Bray Municipal District Manager.

Lorraine Gallagher, CEO of County Wicklow Partnership Brian Carty, elected members, stakeholders and members of the public.

Over time, erosion and overuse had damaged the popular trail on the mountain and its surrounding habitat. The ambitious path restoration works, which commenced in

early 2024 have now been completed. These works included screening reports, helicopter airlifts of materials, hand-pitched path restoration, drainage improvements and replanting of the lower section of the mountain. These efforts will now encourage habitat development and recovery, providing a stepped trail and

a designated safer route for users ascending and descending the mountain.

Funding for this project was provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), with Matching Funds from Wicklow County Council. A key priority of the

scheme is to promote outdoor activity tourism as part of a long-term vision for sustainable rural development in Ireland. The Sugarloaf Mountain lies along the route of the Sugarloaf Way, which will eventually connect Bray Head to the Wicklow Way and other trails in the Wicklow Mountains.

Officially opening the trail, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Paul O'Brien noted, "This iconic mountain in County Wicklow is one of our most visited peaks, attracting over 1,000 visitors weekly throughout the year. We can now expect both locals and many visitors to enjoy an improved outdoor experience around the Sugarloaf, whether they come to the car park to admire the mountain, have a picnic, or climb to the top for magnificent views over County Dublin, County Wicklow and beyond the Irish Sea to the mountains of Wales. Today, I think it is fitting to say: never measure the height of a mountain until you reach the top."

Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District Cllr. Dermot O'Brien also spoke at the event, stating, "What's remarkable about this project is that investing in the land is ultimately investing in the people. Upgrading this iconic mountain trail is not just about restoration; it's about renewing the relationship between people and place and restoring the paths without losing the poetry. The Wicklow Trails App represents a fusion of heritage and technology, ensuring that this process balances protection with participation."

Emer O'Gorman, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, added, "We are grateful to the Department for their funding and support, which enables us to complete this and many other



Cllr Paul O'Brien and Cllr Stephen Stokes at the Great Sugarloaf.



Aisling Hubbard, Carol Coad, Aaron Byrne, Bernie Byrne and Helen Lawless with the Trail Breaker Team at the opening of Sugarloaf Restoration Project and launch of the Wicklow Trails app.



CEO of CWP Brian Carty, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Paul O'Brien and Chairperson of CWP Board Liz Wall.



Members of the County Council, the County Wicklow Partnership, the Trail Breaker team, the Wicklow Local Sports Partnership and local representatives with Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Paul O'Brien at the opening of Sugarloaf Restoration Project and launch of the Wicklow Trails app.

outdoor recreation projects. The project was a joint effort between Wicklow County Council's Outdoor Recreation staff and Bray MD, with stakeholders and landowners that took part in consultations and the expert contractors who completed the works, requiring a specific skillset for mountain path restoration."

Theresa O'Brien, Director of Services, noted at the opening, "This and all our other ORIS projects can be completed successfully thanks to our outdoor recreation staff, who work collaboratively with landowners and contractors to ensure these amenities meet the highest standards for outdoor recreation. Howie Miller from Trailbreakers in Wicklow, and contractors Matt McConway and Frank McMahon and crews, have created a showcase site for traditional path construction techniques in the Leinster region. By training new contractors during this project, they have also contributed to building

local capacity for future outdoor projects."

Aaron Byrne, Rural Recreation Officer, emphasised, "The Sugarloaf project demonstrates how restoration and recreation can work hand in hand. It aims to align the finite capacity of the environment with the increasing number of recreational users in our mountains, benefiting both the mountain and its visitors."

Wicklow Sports & Recreation Partnership Aisling Hubbard, who launched the Wicklow Trails App, noted, "This App is a one stop shop for all the trails information around Wicklow. The interaction with the App to date has been really impressive and we hope it will help people explore even more trails throughout Wicklow and discover hidden gems along the way."

Cllr Stephen Stokes stated: "The Great Sugarloaf is a treasured part of Wicklow's landscape and identity. This restoration project ensures that the mountain is protected while enhancing the

visitor experience. The Wicklow Trails App, is a fantastic tool for both locals and tourists to explore our county's breath-taking walks, and to do so safely and sustainably."

"Of particular interest is that 20% of visitors are viewing the website from a desktop. This indicates that people are planning their journeys in advance. Part of the goal with the app is to encourage walkers to consider alternative trails, which encourages tourism right across County Wicklow rather than a few key sites. This is a wonderful day for County Wicklow. Not only have we preserved a vital part of our natural heritage at the Great Sugarloaf, but we are also embracing technology to promote responsible outdoor recreation. The Wicklow Trails App will empower users and encourage more people to discover the beauty of our county."

The Wicklow Trails App can be downloaded from www.wicklow-trails.ie

Aontú slams Government for revoking 4,000 deportation orders

Aontú has accused the government of undermining Ireland's asylum system after new figures revealed that nearly 4,000 deportation orders have been overturned in the past decade. Wicklow Aontú representative Ciarán Hogan and party leader Peadar Tóibín highlighted the scale of the revocations, revealed through parliamentary questions, as evidence of what they call a “chaotic” and “unsustainable” system, further exacerbated by a tripling of family reunification applications and skyrocketing costs to the state.

Between 2015 and 2024, thousands of deportation orders were officially revoked by successive Ministers for Justice, including over 1,000 under Simon Harris during his tenure as acting minister between 2022 and mid-2023.

The figures, uncovered through a parliamentary question from Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín, show that deportation orders, issued only after failed applications and appeals, are being routinely overturned, allowing rejected applicants to remain in Ireland.

This issue is compounded by a major rise in family reunification approvals. A separate parliamentary question from Independent TD Carol Nolan revealed that family reunification approvals for asylum seekers have more than tripled since 2019. Though the State does not record how many individuals each approval covers, previous data suggests an average of three family members per applicant, potentially adding thousands more arrivals annually.

Highlighting the contradictions in the system, Hogan and Tóibín pointed to a much-publicised deportation flight earlier



Peadar Toibin TD (left) and Ciaran Hogan (right), Aontu.

this year that removed 127 individuals, only for the same number of deportation orders to be overturned since January.

The financial burden is also growing rapidly. The State is now spending an estimated €1.2 billion annually on asylum accommodation, amounting to €36,000 per asylum seeker per year, or roughly €100 per day.

“That figure has ballooned, it's now ten times the 2019 total,” said Deputy Tóibín.

“The government is paying hotel rates for long-term accommodation. This has led to a massive transfer of wealth, nearly €4 billion, to private providers.”

Speaking to the *Wicklow Times*, local Aontú representative Ciarán Hogan said:

“The whole asylum process is complete chaos. We want a fair and just system that is strictly enforced. But at the moment, it's anything but. Delays of years, endless appeals, judicial reviews-and even after all that, deportation orders are wiped. That gives people with no right to be here open access to our streets, services, and communities.”

Outside the Dáil, Tóibín concluded: “The government is trying to look tough on immigration, but the truth is they've gone completely soft. Their actions don't match their rhetoric.”

Deportation Orders Revoked by Year:

| |
|----------------------|
| 2015 - 481 |
| 2016 - 360 |
| 2017 - 163 |
| 2018 - 318 |
| 2019 - 340 |
| 2020 - 301 |
| 2021 - 232 |
| 2022 - 586 |
| 2023 - 416 |
| 2024 - 524 |
| 2025 (to date) - 127 |
| Total: 3,741 |

Family Reunification Approvals:

| |
|-----------|
| 2019: 265 |
| 2024: 983 |

(Each application may cover multiple individuals; previous figures suggest ~ 3 people per applicant.)

Estimated Cost of Asylum Accommodation:

| |
|---|
| €1.2 billion per year |
| €36,000 per asylum seeker annually (€100/day) |
| Tenfold increase since 2019 |

Total ~€4 billion transferred to private accommodation providers in recent years



Pictured are Shay Reid and Drew Kavanagh from Ballinastoe. They were competing in the Under 8 boys 200m at the Roundwood qualifiers for this year's Community Games.

Timmins meets with Herbert Road campaigners

Proposed closure raised directly with Taoiseach

Following his recent Dail contribution to the Taoiseach on the matter, last week Edward Timmins TD met with Herbert Road campaigners.

Speaking from outside Kilbride Church Herbert Road Bray, Deputy Timmins stated: I'm delighted to be here in Bray this evening. Herbert Road is an essential route for residents, emergency services, and local businesses. The closure of this junction will create significant congestion in North Wicklow. Closing Herbert Road and improving the bus corridor shouldn't be mutually exclusive.

“A more balanced approach would be to terminate the southbound bus lane before the Herbert Road junction, relieving traffic congestion without cutting off this vital access point for emergency services.”

Regarding bus con-



Edward Timmins TD.

nects Deputy Timmins remarked: “As a result of bus connects, the recent loss of the 145 bus which served many estates on or near Herbert Road is causing significant hardship for elderly residents - for example, residents in this area who once had a direct bus to

Loughlinstown Hospital now must swap buses, or walk often unsuitable distances to the new E1 bus stops.”

Deputy Timmins questioned: “First it's the bus, and now it's the road. What next Taoiseach?”

Deputy Timmins concluded: “In Dáil Éireann, I explained to the Taoiseach sustainable investment in rail infrastructure is the most effective long-term solution for this area. Extending the DART to Wicklow Town and fast-tracking the Luas Green Line extension to Bray and Fassaroe would provide reliable, efficient alternatives to car travel and reduce pressure on the N11. It's time to support the entire community of Bray.”



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTÁIN
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

PROPOSED VARIATION NO. 4

DRAFT GREYSTONES – DELGANY & KILCOOLE LOCAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2025

PUBLIC INFORMATION DAYS

Everyone is invited to public information days for the Draft Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole Local Planning Framework. These will be held on the following dates:

Thursday 29 May – Kilcoole Community Centre, Lott Lane, Kilcoole A63 X862

Wednesday 04 June – Greystones Municipal District Civic Offices, Mill Road, Greystones A63 TX86

Both public information days will be open from 10.00 to 13.00, and again from 16.00 to 19.00 on the relevant day.

Local community / sporting groups are invited to arrange a one to one meeting between 14.00 and 16.00 on those dates. Please ring 0404 20148 to arrange a one to one meeting. The plan team will be available at the public information days to answer any questions on the Proposed Variation / the Draft Local Planning Framework, the plan process and to help guide the public on how to make a submission.

MAKING A SUBMISSION

Submissions or observations regarding the Proposed Variation and the associated reports are hereby invited from the public and interested bodies. Children, or groups or associations representing the interests of children, are entitled to make submissions or observations. Written submissions or representations made before **midnight on 20 June 2025** will be taken into consideration before the making of the Proposed Variation.

Submissions may be made in **one** of the following ways:

1. Write to 'Variation No.4, Administrative Officer, Planning Section, Wicklow County Council, Station Road, Wicklow Town.
2. Through the **online consultation portal** at www.wicklow.ie or scan the QR code on this notice.

Wicklow County Council is committed to Access For All. All of the documents are available in alternative format on request. Please contact Wicklow County Council on 0404-20100 should you have any specific access requirements.



Brady backs Rathnew 'Save The Donkeys' campaign

Sinn Féin TD for Wicklow John Brady has lent his full support to the Save The Donkeys Rathnew campaign, following a visit to meet with owners of Wags and Trey, Gerry, and Sandra. The couple, who have been caring for several rescue donkeys, are currently experiencing difficulties stemming from what appear to be minor and bureaucratic issues with Donkey Sanctuary Ireland.



Deputy John Brady, Sinn Féin Rep Anthony Hill and Gerry Kinsella.

Speaking after the visit, Deputy Brady said: "I had the opportunity today to visit Gerry and Sandra at their home in Rathnew, where they have been looking after three rescued donkeys in immaculate conditions. Their dedication to the animals is absolutely clear in the donkeys are part of their family, and it's evident how much love and care they put into looking after them."

Deputy Brady was joined by local Sinn Féin representative, Anthony Hill for the visit, during which both listened to the couple outline the chal-

lenges they are currently facing.

"The issues raised seem to be minor bureaucratic and could be resolved with a bit of common sense and good will," Brady continued. "While no one disputes the importance of upholding animal welfare standards, these donkeys are clearly well loved and looked after. People were constantly calling by to visit them while we were there, and car after car beeped in support of the campaign as they passed."

Brady urged others to get behind the campaign

and to show support for Gerry and Sandra's efforts.

"I would encourage anyone who cares about animal welfare, or who believes in community spirit, to find out more about the Save The Donkeys Rathnew campaign on Facebook. These donkeys are loved and cherished by Gerry, Sandra, their family, and the wider community - and their care should not be undermined by red tape. I sincerely hope that common sense will prevail, and that Wags and Trey can stay in their loving home."



Deputy John Brady and Gerry Kinsella with Donkeys Wags and Trey.

National Heritage Funding for Wicklow projects

Six projects in Wicklow have secured a total of €96,068 in funding under the Heritage Council's 2025 Community Heritage Grant Scheme. The Heritage Council is distributing more than €1.9 million through the Scheme this year to support 132 heritage initiatives across Ireland.

These grants will enable local communities to conserve and celebrate Ireland's built, cultural, and natural heritage. The allocation follows a national call for applications in February, which attracted hundreds of proposals from heritage groups, volunteers, and community organisations across the country.

The funding recipients for Wicklow are as follows:

- Golden Eagle Trust, €15,192 (Across multiple counties)
- Castletimon Graveyard Committee, €9,225
- ReWild Wicklow, €20,000

- The Alfred Beit Foundation, €22,454
- St Saviour's Church, €25,000
- Wicklow Uplands Council, €17,491

The €25,000 awarded to St Saviour's Church will support its work St. Saviour's Church Bells Restoration Project. This initiative will see the historic Arklow church, designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield, undergo essential restoration to preserve its structure and rare bells, which have served the community for 125 years.

Several funded initiatives will operate across Ireland. These include

Bat Conservation Ireland, which has been awarded €15,583 for the second phase of its "Gardening for Bats" project; the Royal Dublin Society, receiving €19,491 for the preservation, digitisation, and cataloguing of the Lawrence Steele Egyptology Collection; and the Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Network, which has been granted €22,525 for its project on the oral histories of Irish show people.

Projects like these reflect the wide range of initiatives supported by the scheme - from safeguarding historic struc-

tures to researching local heritage, restoring habitats, and building biodiversity expertise within communities. A full list of funded projects is available from here.

All funded projects can begin work immediately and are expected to be completed by the end of the year. Previous recipients in Wicklow have used this funding to restore architectural features, digitise local archives, and carry out conservation training - strengthening both the preservation of heritage and the local economy.

Tánaiste Simon Harris said: "These awards reflect the strong commitment of Wicklow communities to preserving their local heritage and environment. From historic churchyards to

our unique natural woodlands, these projects are deeply rooted in our identity as Wicklow people and our children's future. It's great to see a balance between tradition and innovation, especially in projects like the wool heritage initiative, which looks to the past to shape a more sustainable tomorrow. I am grateful for the work that went into delivering these awards, from the local communities to the local Fine Gael Councillors in Wicklow and more. This support highlights once again the crucial role of community life in making these projects possible."

Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity, Christopher O'Sullivan TD, said: "Community groups and

heritage organisations do incredible work in preserving and our natural, cultural and built heritage for generations to come. From conserving historic buildings and graveyards, to digitising archives, restoring monuments, and promoting biodiversity, these initiatives ensure that Ireland's unique stories, traditions, and places are protected for future generations. I am inspired by the creativity and commitment shown by groups across the country, and proud that this scheme continues to empower local communities to safeguard our heritage in all its forms."

Dr. Martina Moloney, Chairperson of the Heritage Council added: "The Heritage Council

is committed to empowering communities and ensuring that our shared heritage is preserved and celebrated by all. This scheme reflects that commitment, supporting a diverse range of projects - from conservation and skills training to research and interpretation - that might not otherwise receive funding. Initiatives like the Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme, Adopt a Monument, and Heritage in Schools show how local engagement and national support can combine to deliver real, lasting benefits. The Community Heritage Grant Scheme is a vital part of this approach, helping communities across Ireland protect the places, stories, and tra-

ditions that matter most to them." Virginia Teehan, Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, remarked: "Through the Community Heritage Grant Scheme, we are proud to support the work of local groups who care deeply about their heritage and who are taking meaningful action to protect and promote it. Whether it's restoring a local landmark, recording oral histories, or creating habitats for biodiversity, these projects have a tangible and lasting impact. They strengthen local identity, drive tourism, and create opportunities for learning, connection, and employment. We see time and again how this scheme brings people together and builds pride of place across the country."

More than €440,000 for four marine infrastructure projects

Minister of State for Fisheries and the Marine Timmy Dooley, TD, has announced the allocation of funding of €4.33 million for 57 local authority projects across eleven coastal local authorities.

The funding will assist the coastal local authorities in the maintenance and development of fishery and aquaculture linked marine infrastructure in their own-ership.

Commenting on the importance of the investment, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Martin Heydon, TD, said: "This year's package of €4.33 million is the largest allocation to the Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme outside of the BALAMI Scheme, and it will improve the facilities and amenities for the wider marine community in these often rural coastal areas, with positive knock on-effects for fishers, tourism and local economies. This investment demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to rural and coastal Ireland."

Minister Dooley commented: "This Government has vowed to invest in our State Fishery Harbour Centres and public marine infrastructure. I am delighted, therefore, to announce allocation of €4.33 million to 11 local authorities, which will fund 57 projects supporting maritime communities right across Ireland's coastline. The increased total value of individual projects in this year's allocation gives local authorities the opportunity to continue the ongoing development and enhancement of harbour and fishing facilities, while also allowing for some marine leisure developments, benefitting different cohorts of users."

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will administer the programme and will co-fund up to 75% of the eligible project costs,

up to a maximum reimbursement of €187,500, with the local authority co-funding the remaining costs.

Tánaiste Simon Harris said "This is a vital and welcome investment in Wicklow's marine infrastructure. The increased total value of individual projects across the country in this year's allocation gives local authorities the opportunity to continue the ongoing development and enhancement of harbour and fishing facilities, while also allowing for some marine leisure developments, benefitting different cohorts of users. These projects will ensure our harbours are safer, more secure, and better equipped to support local communities, businesses, and tourism. I am proud to have supported this funding and will continue to advocate for investment in our coastal infrastructure."



Sheena and Henry Cullen at the Wicklow Rugby Club Dinner Dance in the Arklow Bay Hotel.

Whitmore reiterates call for action in support of Palestinian people

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore, has reiterated her commitment to supporting the Palestinian people following a meeting with the Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr. Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid.



Jennifer Whitmore TD meeting with the Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr. Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid.

"Today's meeting with Ambassador Abdalmajid was a crucial opportunity for me to reaffirm our unwavering support for the Palestinian cause," Deputy Whitmore stated. "The strength and resilience of the Palestinian people in the face of ongoing challenges must not be overlooked. "It is imperative that we maintain our steadfast support for the Palestinian people and keep the issue of genocide and human rights abuses at the forefront of our agenda," Deputy Whitmore added. "The Social Democrats' support for the Palestinian people remains unwavering. We will continue to call out injustices and work tirelessly to promote peace and justice for the Palestinian people. Today's discussion with Ambassador Abdalmajid reinforced the urgency of this mission, and I am incredibly grateful to have been given the opportunity to meet with her," Deputy Whitmore concluded.



Sibeal Devilly, Faten Alsourani and IPSC Wicklow member Barbara Kelly.

Bray residents to lobby TDs to enact the Occupied Territories Bill

Speaking to a crowd of about fifty people on Thursday 15th May, Faten Alsourani, Palestinian Human Rights lawyer from Gaza and Campaigns Outreach Officer for Trocaire, shared her own experiences and stressed the need for action to exert pressure on the Israeli state to end the war. "Ireland has a responsibility to respond to this, to address it, under international law," she said.

Also speaking was Sibeal Devilly, Political Engagement Advisor with Trocaire. The event was to commemorate the 1948 Nakba, the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. This displacement was accelerated by news of massacres at villages such as Deir Yassin and Tantura. Much of Gaza's population today is made up of refugees from this time. The evening featured a letter writing session to Wicklow's TDs, urging them to enact the Occupied Territories Bill, as well as a short film screening and a live musical performance by Ellen O'Meara. The event was organised by Trocaire in conjunction with the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, North Wicklow Against Genocide and Pals for Palestine.

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NEWTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Newtown Business Association forging ahead

The town of Newtownmountkennedy may have one of the longest names of any town in Ireland but that's not what it is gaining attention for. Acclaimed as the fastest growing town, population wise, in Ireland, some even say in Europe, its business base is also swelling. In the past few years canny businesses have seen the opportunities and established bases here. Start-up ventures view it as a 'business friendly' location. This has culminated with the official launch of the Newtown Business Association last week, and the good and the great came out to celebrate and wish them success.

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*In contentious business, a solicitor may not calculate fees or other charges as a percentage or proportion of any award or settlement



Public representatives at the launch of the Newtown Business Association; Cllr Danny Alvey, Cllr Graham Richmond, Edward Timmins TD, Senator Pat Casey, Cllr Stephen Stokes, Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Paul O'Brien, Cllr Orla Finn, Cllr Lourda Scott, Cllr Shane Langrell and Cllr John Snell.



NEWTOWN BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE CENTRE

Newtown Business and Enterprise Centre will comprise 52 units, set in an enclosed business park setting in Newtownmountkennedy, only 10 minutes from Bray, where a wide variety of retail and commercial amenities including shopping centre, banking halls, restaurants, etc., are available. The development will consist of 4 blocks totalling 52 units with a wide variety of sizes available For Sale or To Let. A selection of units will be available at 1,550sq.ft., 3,100sq.ft., 3,250sq.ft., 4,000sq.ft. and 4,250sq.ft. (143sq.m. – 393sq.m.). Extensive infrastructural work has been carried out in recent years on the N11, (M11) with virtually uninterrupted passage now available from South Dublin to Rosslare. The completion of the M50 Motorway, which is now imminent, will provide direct routing to the South, West and North of the country, making Newtown Business and Enterprise Centre a preferred location both in terms of distribution and accessibility.

SPECIFICATION

- Architectural wall panels • Profiled Composite Metal Cladding Construction • Eaves Height 6.2m (20'6") approximately • Colour-coded PVC coated aluminium windows and personnel doors
- Insulated goods access doors • Low maintenance exterior finish
- All mains services • Excellent design & layout • Enclosed landscaped business park setting.

For further information on to arrange a visit contact Rory Fenlon on: 01 201 4650 or email: rory@fenlonproperties.ie

The Newtown Business Association (NBA) has been meeting together as a group for over a year, endeavouring to work collaboratively, and move forward with a vision that celebrates Newtown Mount Kennedy as a town that supports a thriving business community, some of which are long established, some bravely starting new ventures,

creating opportunities, looking outwards, networking in support of growth and development. We mention below some of the diverse enterprises trading in the town.

Recently awarded European award, for historic pond restoration at Emmet's Castle, Kilpedder, Paul Kavanagh of **Landscape.ie** blends over 40 years of expertise with a passion for time-

less outdoor spaces. If reviving a forgotten pond, or reimagining your home's unique garden challenge, Paul delivers exceptional results with care and precision no matter the size.

Located in Newtownmountkennedy, natural heritage capabilities is his strength. "Most planting schemes, design layout and full garden redesigns, patios, drive-

ways, lighting, water features excite us to completion" says Paul. Visit Landscape.ie to discover what your landscape can become.

Senator Pat CASEY

FIANNA FAÏL
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

I welcome the establishment of Newtown Business Association and wish them every success



pat.casey@oireachtas.ie
086 264 9483

Fitzwilliam Square, Wicklow Town.



Best Wishes to Newtownmountkennedy Business Association

PAUL KAVANAGH Landscapes & Consultancy

Season Park Farm, Newtownmountkennedy
Co. Wicklow. A63HW53

Email:

seasonpark@hotmail.com

Or info@landscape.ie

Paul's Mobile:

087 1458164





NEWTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



Deputy Timmins speaking at the launch.



The thriving Newtown Business Park and Enterprise Centre.

Nordic Ireland is a Glamping and Outdoor Adventure tent supplier. Nordic Ireland is about quality.

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warm and safe. We understand modern living and the need to step off the pavement and get into the hills. We know that to

camp in your back garden can be as much fun as up on Tonelagee in mid summer. We have supplied to Glamping businesses, Polar Clubs, Outdoor adventurers, Scout Troops Canoe Clubs and just anyone who is interested in quality long lasting equipment," declares Huw O'Toole (0878041636, www.nordicireland.ie).

Benville Robinson solicitors LLP first opened its doors in 1994 and has been serving the people of Wicklow and beyond ever since.

The firm has a highly experienced and accredited team of solicitors specializing in Probate, Conveyancing, general, commercial and planning and environmental litigation.

The firm's capacity has expanded in recent years with the opening of a branch office in Newtownmountkennedy, serving both residents and business within Newtownmountkennedy alike.

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As one of the largest firms in Wicklow Benville Robinson continues to uphold its values of top-drawer legal advice whilst adapting to an ever changing legal landscape.

Prendergast Maguire was founded in 2006 by Paul Prendergast and Brendan Maguire. They have been based in Newtownmountkennedy

since 2008 and the business has grown year on year and now there are nine employees and they all reside in the area. They offer a range of Services including Mortgages, Life Assurance, Pensions and Investments.

They hold direct agencies with all seven available lenders and advise First Time Buyers, Movers, Switchers and Equity Release.

They are delighted to be members of The Newtown Business Association and wish the group every success. Prendergast Maguire Financial Services is regulated by The Central Bank Of Ireland

Fenelon's Properties' Rory Fenelon heads up this estate agency and says "At Fenelon Properties, we understand that selling your home is a significant decision, one that requires careful consideration and expert guidance. Whether you're moving up the property ladder, downsizing, or simply exploring new opportunities, our experienced team is here to ensure a smooth, successful sale. We provide tailored advice, professional marketing, and a personal touch to help you achieve the best possible outcome."

"For buyers we offer a flexible & accommodating approach to visit a variety of homes in the North County Wicklow and South Dublin areas.

"We offer an informed & honest view on the property as well as the area and associated services. At Fenelon Properties, we under-

stand that letting your property is a significant decision.

"Our dedicated team offers tailored services to landlords across

North Wicklow & South Dublin, ensuring your best outcome and that your property is managed efficiently & effectively."

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The Baltinglass brain health experiment

How Rathcoran estate became a living laboratory for community, cognition, and the art of getting along

Tucked into the scenic green hills of Baltinglass, the Rathcoran Estate is quietly redefining what it means to live well in Co. Wicklow. It looks like a tidy housing scheme, but for the last two years, Rathcoran has been the site of a carefully staged experiment, one that ties social housing to the emerging science of “brain health.”



Since 2022, Rathcoran has been the site of a pioneering collaboration between Respond, Ireland's largest approved housing body, and the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) at Trinity College Dublin. Together, they've launched the Brain Health Village (BHV) pilot project, an initiative exploring how the design of homes, shared spaces, and social activities can actively support better brain function across all ages.

Research suggests that enriched, stimulating environments, complete with social connections, creativity, and movement, can help build stronger brain connections. At Rathcoran, that science is being put into joyful, community-driven practice.

The estate includes 56 homes, a health centre, and a diverse mix of residents—individuals, families, and refugees from Iraq and Syria who have joined through the Refugee Resettlement Programme. The convent building at the heart of the estate has been lovingly repurposed, and the

estate now hums with a mix of community planting beds, play areas, and even an Artist-in-Residence, Siobhán Madden, who works year-round with locals on creative projects.

Most recently, Rathcoran was abuzz with colour and craic for its annual Street Feast, held on Sunday, May 25th. The afternoon brought neighbours of all ages together to share food, celebrate diversity, and take part in a whole host of activities, including Pilates, face painting, slime workshops, music, and the ever-popular petting farm.

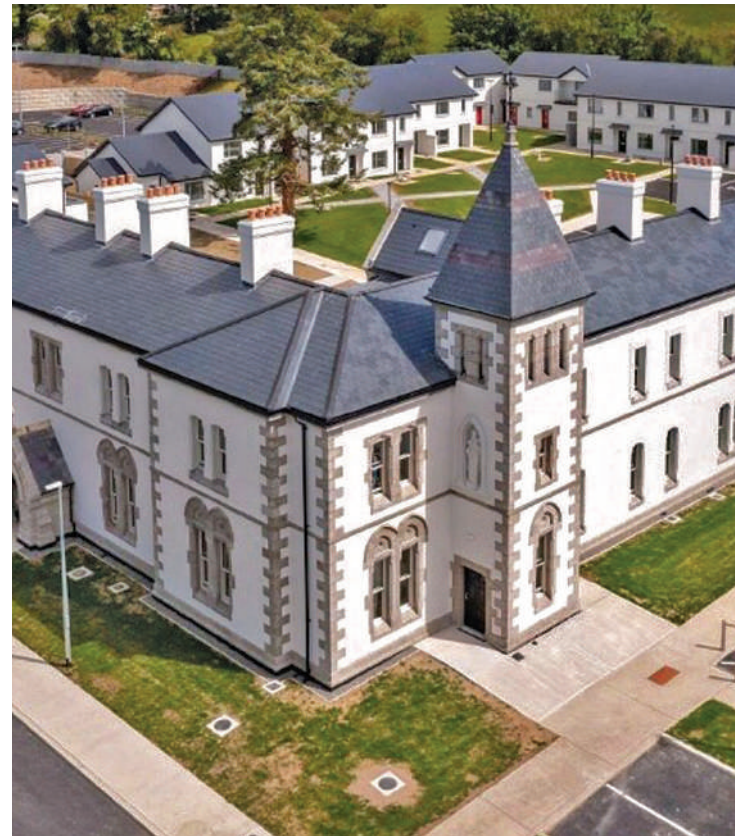
It was a day packed with laughter, connection, and creativity. Children (and quite a few adults) got stuck into art and planting workshops with Siobhán, while garden beds built by the Men's Shed team were proudly admired by all. The feast was more than just a party, it was a living example of how community events can promote inclusion, wellness, and shared joy.

This vibrant day was the result of a broader collaboration between Rathcoran residents, Respond, and Wicklow County Council's Creative Places Baltinglass programme. Over the past year, they've been working closely to co-design new events and projects that reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

Niamh Randall, Respond's National Spokesperson, put it best: “Community is at the heart of everything we do at Respond. We know that creating strong, connected neighbourhoods supports people's wellbeing and helps places to thrive. Our Tenant Experience team has been proud to support the Rathcoran community in shaping this special day.”

Wicklow County Council also played a key role. Cathaoirleach Cllr. Paul O'Brien praised the day as “a great example of family engagement and creative collaboration,” while Chief Executive Emer O'Gorman described the project as “an innovative partnership that supports wellbeing in communities for residents to thrive.”

The Rathcoran Street



The Brain Health Village in Rathcoran, Baltinglass.

Feast was presented by Respond Housing and supported by Wicklow County Council, the Arts Council, and the Creative Places Baltinglass project.

It also received funding through the Brain Health Project, tying in seamlessly with the wider vision for this inspiring neighbourhood.

As the residents of Rathcoran showed, it really does take a village, not just to raise a child, but to build a healthy, connected, joyful place to call home.



Siobhán Madden and Ray Brooks Rathcoran.



A life in service to Greystones

Kathleen Kelleher has helped shape Greystones from quiet seaside village to thriving town - and she's still not done

Earlier this month, at the Greystones People of the Year Awards, loud applause rippled through Greystones Golf Club as Kathleen Kelleher took to the stage. Her name had just been announced as the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, and for those who know her, which is just about everyone in Greystones, it was a moment long overdue.

For more than five decades, Kathleen has been a cornerstone of civic life in the town. A community volunteer, public representative, newsletter compiler, committee chair, calendar curator, heritage advocate, and above all, a passionate Greystonian, her fingerprints are quietly but firmly embedded in almost every aspect of local life.

Born and raised in the U.S., in Boston, Kathleen moved to Ireland over fifty years ago. In 1973, she and her husband settled in Rathdown Park, then still under construction. "Everything else that you see now was just green fields," she wrote in a reflective piece in 2023 marking her 50th year in Greystones. The town she arrived in was a quieter



Kathleen in 2023 surrounded by family, celebrating her 50th year in Greystones.

place, Church Road lined with cottages, St. Laurence's just a glimmer of

chalkdust in the Department's eye, and Flynn's Supermarket still operating beside the old Ormonde cinema.

But as Greystones grew, so too did Kathleen's role in it. She began, as many do, by helping out where she could, a young mother of four boys pitching in at schools, attending meetings, and joining local groups. But in time, she became something far more: a kind of civic compass, pointing people toward what mattered, reminding them to stay involved, and showing by example what a life of service looks like.

Kathleen served 15 years on Greystones Town Council, including five years as a Wicklow County Councillor, and chaired the Community Affairs Committee throughout. During her time in public office, she represented Fianna Fáil, and her loyalty to the party has never wavered. Even after stepping back from elected life, she has remained a staunch advocate and supporter of Fianna Fáil, regularly attending events, backing local candidates, and continuing to engage in party affairs at a grassroots level. Her contributions stretch well beyond the council chamber. Kathleen played a key role in Greystones Cancer Support since its early days, over 25 years ago. Whether organising fundraisers, helping to coordinate events, or offering encouragement to those in need, she has been a quiet yet unwavering presence in one of the town's most vital support networks.

She has also lent her time and energy to an array of other causes: Meals on Wheels, Siamsa Fhéile Pádraig, Toastmasters, school boards, and numerous residents' associations. She served on key county and regional bodies, from the Housing and Planning Strategic Policy Committees to the Wicklow Heritage Forum and the Greystones Harbour Liaison Committee. If a meeting was being held about the future of the town, chances are Kathleen was in the room, notes in hand, ready to speak up.

These days, she remains deeply involved in civic life through her work with the Greystones Active Retirement Association, where her energy and commitment continue to inspire those around her.



Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Tom Fortune presenting Kathleen with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Greystones People of the Year Awards earlier this month in Greystones Golf Club.

This year, she was also honoured in a particularly visible way: Kathleen served as Grand Marshal of the 2025 Greystones St. Patrick's Day Parade. It was a fitting tribute for someone who has marched, metaphorically and literally, at the heart of the town's civic and cultural life for decades.

And of course, she is still the steady hand behind the Greystones Weekly Calendar of Notices and Local Events, an email bulletin now relied upon by hundreds of locals each week to stay informed and connected.

When asked why she gives so much of her time,

Kathleen's own words say it best:

"Any effort you put in will be rewarded back to you many times over."

That spirit, of showing up, giving back, and doing the work even when no one is looking, is what made her the natural choice for this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. But awards were never the goal. Community was. As she wrote in 2023:

"We were so grateful to have a roof over our heads and good schools for the children... I urge you to get to know your town, read the local newspapers, listen to the local radio. Keep up with our online

Greystones news, stay informed... Lots still to do and lots still to be involved in."

Kathleen continues to embody that philosophy. She attends meetings, supports her neighbours, lends her experience to civic and community groups, and remains a watchful, generous presence at events throughout the year.

Greystones has changed dramatically since she first arrived, but her guiding principles - community, service, decency, remain timeless. And thanks to her, they're woven into the very fabric of the town.

What more could we ask for?

Fergal FitzGerald Doyle

Wishing Kathleen Kelleher continued success

FIANNA Fáil
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

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doylefergal76@gmail.com

Cllr. Stephen Stokes

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

Congratulations to my good friend Kathleen Kelleher, Former Mayor of Greystones. A pillar of our twinning with Holyhead, Wales. A lifetime of great service to Greystones. Wishing you continued success.

stephenstokes101@gmail.com
@StephenStokesGreystones

An Independent Voice for the Greystones Municipal District

Cllr. Pat KENNEDY

Continued Success to Kathleen Kelleher

FIANNA Fáil
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

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Wishing Kathleen Kelleher continued success

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#TheVoiceOfReason Cllrtomf

Cllr. PAT FITZGERALD

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Wishing Kathleen Kelleher Continued Success

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FIANNA Fáil
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Senator Pat CASEY

FIANNA Fáil
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Wishing Continued Success to Kathleen Kelleher

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086 264 9483
Fitzwilliam Square, Wicklow Town.

BIFE launches ground-breaking Business & Psychology Degree



In a landmark development for learners seeking a modern, versatile education, Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE) is proud to announce the launch of the Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business & Psychology. This innovative Level 8 degree, delivered in partnership with the Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT), blends the analytical rigour of business with the insight and empathy of psychology, a powerful combination for the evolving world of work.

According to Larry Coyle, Course Co-ordinator, "Today's employers aren't just looking for technical know-how; they want graduates who understand people and how teams work, how customers behave, and how leaders inspire. This new degree has been designed specifically to meet those needs. From marketing strategy to social psychology, students will explore a curriculum that builds business fluency while deepening emotional intelligence and

human insight."

The program spans four years, with Years 1 and 2 delivered at BIFE, and Years 3 and 4 completed at IADT in Dun Laoghaire. This unique structure allows students to begin their degree journey in a supportive local environment and then advance to a university setting, all while working toward the same nationally accredited honours degree.

"This isn't a course built in a vacuum. Input from industry partners and lead-

ing educators shaped the curriculum to reflect the realities of modern workplaces. Students will also have the opportunity for industry placements, Erasmus+ exchanges, and hands-on projects during their third year, offering practical experience that employers value highly," he added.

Graduates will leave with the confidence to step into a wide variety of roles in:

- Human Resources
- Marketing and

Communications

- Organisational Development
- Sales and Customer Insights
- Leadership and Strategy

Additionally, the course lays a solid foundation for those wishing to pursue further study in either business or psychology at post-graduate level.

Accessible Pathways to Higher Education

This degree has been designed with inclusion at

its core. Applicants can enter through:

- The Leaving Certificate (minimum of five O6/H7 grades including English and Maths)
- A full Level 5 QQI award
- Mature entry routes for applicants aged 23 or older

Whether you're a school-leaver, a further education graduate, or someone seeking a new direction, this course offers a clear, supported pathway to a respected

honours degree.

This new collaboration between BIFE and IADT is more than just a new course - it represents a shift in how education can be delivered. It breaks down the traditional divide between further and higher education, opening new doors for students and communities alike. As part of the

National Tertiary Office (NTO) initiative, this program demonstrates how institutions can work together to offer flexible, inclusive, and high-quality degree opportunities outside the traditional university system.

With high interest expected, prospective students are encouraged to apply early. You can learn

more about the course and begin your application by visiting www.bife.ie.

Larry finishes by saying "This degree offers our students the best of both worlds, a strong, supportive start at BIFE and a seamless progression to IADT. It's an exciting step forward for business education in Ireland."

Delgany Schools Cup celebrates its 15th year with 16 Wicklow primary school teams battling for glory

The fifteenth Wicklow Primary Schools Cup final was organised and hosted by Delgany Golf Club on Monday, 12th May, featuring 16 Primary School teams from within the Wicklow area.

The winning Boys Team was Delgany National School and the

winning Girls Team was St. Gerard's.

The initiative to

encourage school children up to 12 years of age to play golf was

developed and promoted by Jason Bradshaw and Delgany Golf Club since 2009. PKF Brenson Lawlor, Chartered Accountants co-sponsored this year's event. Local Wicklow Primary Schools have had weekly coaching and practice sessions which have been initiated by teachers and parents involving circa 500 school children from the ages of 8 to 12 years of age. The finals involved 64 boys and girls from fifth and sixth classes.

The Captains' of Delgany Golf Club, Sean O'Rourke and Siobhan Mooney stated that the Club "was proud to be associated once again with this event and congratulated all the teachers, parents, and the young golfers for their tremendous performance during the



St. Gerard's School was the Winning Girls School of the Delgany Schools Cup. Pictured Left to Right are Jason Bradshaw (Founder and Sponsor of the event), Iseult Dodd, Ellie Daisy Hobson, Pippa Joll, Eden Stroh and Siobhan Mooney (Captain, Delgany Golf Club).

year and on the day".

The event involved children from Wicklow primary schools taking part in a team scramble golf competition and was supported by the

head professional at Delgany Golf Club, Gavin Kavanagh and assistant professional, Keith McDermott, who provided the school children with a golf

clinic at the event and gave lessons and support throughout the year.

Jason Bradshaw founder of the event, said he was very pleased to see this grass roots

"get into golf" programme continuing to grow in popularity so well in the Wicklow area and congratulated all the schoolchildren who competed.



Delgany was the Winning Boys School of the Delgany Schools Cup held at Delgany Golf Club on 12th May. Pictured Left to right are; Jake McHugh, Max Chiverton, Daniel Large, Max Mahady, Siobhan Mooney (Captain, Delgany Golf Club) and Jason Bradshaw (Founder and Sponsor of the event).



Open Weekend success at Greystones Bowling Club

Greystones Bowling Club welcomed a fantastic turnout for its recent Open Weekend, an event praised by Cllr Stephen Stokes as a shining example of community spirit and local engagement.

Local residents were invited to participate at their dedicated club facilities in the Burnaby Park, Greystones. Cllr Stokes, who attended the event, expressed his delight at the turnout: "It was wonderful to see so many people at Greystones Bowling Club Open Weekend. The club plays an important role in our community, offering both sporting and social connection. Events like this remind us how lucky we are to have such vibrant local organisations. I'd like to thank all the volunteers who

helped make the day such a success."

The sun shone down as residents of all ages came together to explore the facilities, and try their hand at bowling. Whether seasoned players or complete newcomers, attendees were warmly welcomed, contributing to a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Cllr Stokes thanked Richard Bierney for giving him a dedicated coaching session. Cllr Stokes added: "My thanks to Richard and the team. Lawn bowling is a good workout. Con-

centration is important. It's a very enjoyable sport."

The club hopes the event will encourage new members to join and become part of its growing and inclusive community. With demonstrations, coaching, and plenty of laughter on the green, the Open Weekend showcased the welcoming nature of the club and its commitment to community well-being. For more information about Greystones Bowling Club, and how to get involved, there is a dedicated website at greystonesbc.com.



Cllr Stephen Stokes with Richard Bierney at Greystones Bowling Club.

Launch of the Bray Sports Promotion Unit Strategic Plan

The KWETB Bray Sports Promotion Unit has announced the launch of its new Strategic Plan, a forward-looking roadmap aimed at increasing sports and physical activity participation of young people, improving their health and wellbeing choices and decision-making, and fostering a stronger, healthier community through sport and physical activity.

The Strategic Plan, developed in consultation with local stakeholders and young people, sets out a clear vision for the growth and development of sport in Bray over the next three years.

- Its three aims are:
1. provide physical activity and well-being programmes to vulnerable young people
 2. support vulnerable young people to make pos-

itive health and well-being choices.

3. provide the best possible service to the community and its young people. "We are excited to launch this strategy, which is informed by the voices and needs of our community," said Tadhg McDonald, Chair of the KWETB Bray Sports Promotion Unit Youth Committee. "Our aim is to ensure that young

people in Bray, Kilcoole, & Newtownmountkennedy has the opportunity to get involved in sport and physical activity in a welcoming and supportive environment," said Ruth Comerford, Coordinator of the KWETB Bray Sports Promotion Unit.

"The Strategic Plan also supports national and regional objectives under Sport Ireland and

aligns with the Wicklow Local Sports Partnership's mission to promote lifelong participation in sport and physical activity. Bray Sports Promotion Unit is a Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board programme funded by the Department of Education & Youth's UBU Your Place Your Space Youth Work funding stream.



Football Blitz held in Ballinakill

The sun shone in Ballinakill at the 3rd and 4th class football blitz on the 15th May. Participating schools in the Boys Football Blitz included: Kilcommon, Aughrim, Laragh, Rathdrum, Shillelagh, Bearna Chlé, Avoca, Crossbridge and Coolfancy. Participating schools in the Girls Football Blitz included: Shillelagh, Aughrim, Crossbridge, Coolfancy, Avoca and Kilcommon. Congratulations to Aughrim (pictured above) who won the Girls Football Final and to

Rathdrum (pictured below) who won the Boys Football.

Cumann na mBunscol Chill Mhantain stated "Thanks to Ballinakill for the use of their facilities and to the referees, teachers, parents and volunteers who made the day possible. Special mention to referee Liam who started refereeing in 1964 and was there in Ballinakill still promoting our games. Most importantly well done to all the boys and girls who participated."



Arklow players celebrate after the Leinster Rugby U16 Girls Cup Final match against Athy at Energia Park in Dublin. Pic Sportsfile.

Wicklow woman releases debut novel

Wicklow writer Sharon Stevens has published her first book, a crime thriller called *Silent Tears of Sin* based in Co. Wicklow.



Sharon Stevens.

When Mason Miller comes to pick up his estranged mother Ruth from Wicklow Train Station on a hot August afternoon, he doesn't realise the door to his family's darkest secrets is about to blow wide open. Resentment simmers between mother and son as they try to find a way to live together through all the painful memories, alcohol-induced bickering and surprise Garda visits. Running into Eden, his teenage love, offers Mason a chance of escape, but it might also be the catalyst that will bring it all to boiling point. Then, one day, Mason is shot on his own doorstep.

What is the Miller family involved in? And who are Joe and Sally, the mysterious, unsettling couple that keeps cropping up behind the scenes at all the major turns of his life? Fans of Irish TV dramas like *Kin* and *Love/Hate* as well as writers Harlan Coben and Gillian Flynn will love this dark, twisty tale of betrayal by Stevens.

Born in Dublin, Sharon Stevens grew up in Rathnew. After attending St. Joseph's Girls National School, Rathnew, and The Dominican Girls Secondary School in Wicklow Town, she studied at Dun Laoghaire Further Education Institute where her creative writing tutor

saw potential and encouraged her to take her writing to the next level.

and UCD, where she graduated with a degree as an Emergency Medical Technician. She has attained diplomas and qualifications in Palliative Care, Veterinary Assistant, Veterinary Medicine, Dog Grooming, Pet Bereavement, Creative Writing, Adult Psychology, and Criminal and Forensic Psychology.

Sharon has always had a huge passion for writing and has been writing stories from a very young age. She has written that "writing is a powerful mindset. If I do not like the chapter I've written, I can erase it and start again. That is the great thing about fiction."



Debut novel by Luke Devlin explores the quiet collapse of a man who listens for a living

What happens when a man who devotes his life to helping others is forced to plunge into the depths of his own silence?

In his literary debut, Dublin-born author and current Blessington resident Luke Devlin delivers a haunting and introspective novel about identity, repression, and the toll of unspoken trauma. *The Anatomy of a Silent Scream* introduces readers to Paddy Flint, a respected therapist who understands how men work-until his own life begins to unravel.

Paddy Flint knows how men work. As a therapist, he's built a career helping others untangle the things they can't say out loud. But when his own life begins to collapse-his marriage in freefall, his sense of self

thinning by the day-he finds himself back in the place he tried to leave behind: the neat semi-detached streets of Tallaght, southwest Dublin, where old ghosts still mutter and the Red Line Luas brazenly dares

you to make eye contact. Encouraged to finally seek help himself, Paddy begrudgingly begins therapy-and with it, experiences a series of vivid dreams that drag buried truths to the surface. As the boundary between

past and present begins to fray, Paddy is forced to confront a silence that has shaped him more than he ever realised.

With dry Dublin wit and a sharply observant eye, *The Anatomy of a Silent Scream* is a lyrical

and unflinching portrait of masculinity, trauma, and the stories men inherit but rarely tell. Devlin's work lingers where language fails, in the spaces between remembering and forgetting, voice and suppression, control and collapse. With empathy, insight, and a sharp eye for the absurd, he writes not to explain, but to witness.

Written with lyrical intensity and psychological precision, *The*

Anatomy of a Silent Scream is a meditation on masculinity, vulnerability, and the limits of control. Early readers are calling it "stark," "unflinching," and "quietly devastating."

For readers of Sebastian Barry, John Boyne, or Douglas Stuart-this is a novel about what happens when the silence finally breaks.

Speaking about his novel, Luke, a practicing psychotherapist, says "I was interested in the

emotional spaces men aren't taught to navigate grief, vulnerability, the silence between what's felt and what's said. Writing Paddy Flint's story allowed me to explore those gaps with honesty and empathy. Therapists are trained to hold other people's pain but what happens when their own becomes too much to carry? That reversal felt compelling, and I wanted to explore how someone who listens for a living might deal

with being the one in need. I'm not Paddy, but I've definitely walked near some of the terrain he covers-wrestling with identity, with silence, with the weight of emotional inheritance. Growing up in Dublin, you become attuned to what's left unsaid, and I think that shaped the emotional architecture of the story."

The novel is now available in paperback through Amazon.

MALAPROP comes to Bray with hit stage exploration of climate breakdown

Award-winning Irish theatre collective, MALAPROP, bring their hit stage exploration of climate breakdown, cruise ship cabaret and the legacies of bad parenting, following their U.S. debut to Mermaid Arts Centre on Friday 30th May at 8.00pm and Saturday 31st May at 8.00pm.

Malaprop Theatre presents an Irish Tour of their award-winning production, *HOTHOUSE*. This fast-paced, poignant story of love, loss, and legacy set on an Arctic cruise ship, takes you - the passenger - on a journey to bid farewell to the ice caps. Following their Off-Broadway debut (2024) where *HOTHOUSE* was selected as a New York Times Critic's Pick, the show tours to 10 venues nationwide taking in Wicklow's Mermaid Arts Centre (Bray) on Friday 30th and Saturday 31st May.

HOTHOUSE brings us on an odyssey that sails through an intergenerational tale complete with horny songbirds, a mad captain, and wanting to change, but not knowing how. Set on a cruise liner in the Arctic, where

the ship's captain is pulling the strings, the play is performed by a cast of five. *HOTHOUSE* with its clever score, looks at the last hundred years in Ireland, and ahead to the next hundred.

Tackling climate breakdown with big ideas, a lot of laughs, and some truly grotesque cabaret musical numbers. The play sees Ruth (in 1969) who refuses to eat sandwiches with lettuce in them. Ali in the present day goes on a cruise to say goodbye to the ice. A parent 100 years in the future tells their child it gets better, even though we're pretty sure they're lying.

HOTHOUSE is directed by Claire O'Reilly (Emma, The Abbey Theatre) and written by Carys D. Coburn (Absent the Wrong, Verity Bargate Award

Winner, Irish Times Theatre Award nominee for Citysong) with MALAPROP. Cast includes Blaithin Mac Gabhann (Dancing at Lughnasa at National Theatre London, Maeve O'Mahony (Abbey Theatre, Collapsing Horse, Sugarglass Theatre, MALAPROP's LOVE+, JERICHO, Everything Not Saved, Before You Say Anything), Thomas Kane Byrne (Darklands, Kin, Derry Girls, Deadly Cuts) and Peter Corboy (Fair City, Rough Magic, Sugarglass Theatre). Set and costume design are by Molly O'Cathain (Gaiety Theatre, Abbey Theatre, Peacock Theatre), lighting design is by John Gunning and Composition, Musical Direction and Sound Design are by Anna Clock.

CAST

Peter Corboy
Thomas Kane Byrne
Blaithin Mac Gabhann
Maeve O'Mahony

CREATIVE TEAM

Written by Carys D. Coburn
with MALAPROP
Directed by Claire O'Reilly
Set & Costume Design by Molly O'Cathain
Composition, Musical
Direction and Sound by Anna Clock
Lighting Design by John Gunning
Assistant Director Ellen Buckley
Produced by Caoimhe Whelan & Heather O'Sullivan



Wicklow artist on show at the National Gallery of Ireland

New free exhibition An Artist's Presence explores how artists represent themselves in their work

On 17th May, the National Gallery of Ireland opened a new exhibition, *An Artist's Presence*, in the Print Gallery. This exhibition explores how artists, consciously or unconsciously, infuse their work with a sense of individuality. Through drawings, prints, photographs, and sketchbooks, complemented by select oil paintings, the exhibition examines themes of perception, legacy, the artistic process, and how an artist's hand can be identified.

Among the artists on show is Wicklow native Frederic William Burton (1816 - 1900). Born in County Wicklow in April 1816, Burton established himself as an artist of great influence over his long career, eventually being appointed director of the National Gallery, London from 1874 - 1894. His works featured in this exhibition include the stunning *Self-Portrait* (c.1845), an introspective piece in graphite on paper; his renowned watercolour *Faust's First Sigh of Marguerite*, 1875, and the more abstract *Monogram of the Artist*, a work in ink and watercolour on paper.

Curated by Katie Buckley, Curatorial Fellow - Prints & Drawings, *An Artist's Presence* presents a compelling selection of newly acquired works shown alongside seldom-seen pieces from the Gallery's collection. The exhibition brings together celebrated Irish and international artists,

including Sarah Henrietta Purser (1848-1943), Walter Frederick Osborne (1859-1903), William Orpen (1878-1931), Seán Keating (1889-1977), Nancy Lee Katz (1947-2018), and Amelia Stein (b. 1958). Highlights include Moyra Barry's introspective *Self-Portrait in the Artist's Studio* (1920), Keating's *Thin-king out Gobnait* (1917), a cherished gift to Harry Clarke, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's graphic portrait of Jane Burden (1858), and Katz's striking photographic portrait of Louise Bourgeois (taken 1986, printed 2018-2023).

The exhibition explores how an artist's presence can be both literal and intangible. It may be visibly asserted in a self-portrait where the artist appears at work, brush or palette in hand, or wearing a painter's smock or felt more subtly through expressive gestures, stylistic choices, or the unguarded marks found in a sketchbooks. Some-

times, presence is revealed in the smallest details: a fingerprint smudged in graphite, a scribbled annotation, or the texture of paper worn by use. Whether seen or sensed, these traces offer intimate insight into the artist's creative process and help us understand their mind-set long after the work is made.

In addition to self-portraiture, *An Artist's Presence* features works where artists have turned their gaze to fellow creatives. These depictions blur the boundaries between sitter and maker, raising compelling questions about whose presence is being conveyed—the subject's, the artist's, or an interplay of both. Such works offer layered narratives, inviting viewers to consider how interpretation and identity intersect within the creative process.

Dr. Caroline Campbell, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, com-

mented: "An Artist's Presence is a thoughtful and intimate exhibition that offers visitors a unique window into the relationship between artists and their work. It encourages us to look closely—not just at the artwork, but at the hand, mind, and identity behind it. Whether through a self-portrait, a shared creative moment, or the quiet traces left in a sketchbook, these works reveal something deeply personal about the artist. We are delighted to share this exhibition with our visitors, drawing on the richness of our collection to explore the many ways artists leave their mark."

Through a diverse selection of works on paper, the exhibition explores themes of perception, memory, influence, and artistic identity. It seeks to immerse visitors in the intimate world of the artist, encouraging them to reflect on the complex relationship

between artist, work of art, and viewer. Ultimately, *An Artist's Presence* invites us to consider how an artist's voice and vision continue to resonate—sometimes boldly, sometimes subtly—but always meaningfully.

An Artist's Presence will be on view in the Print Gallery from 17 May to 14 September 2025. Admission is free. This exhibition is kindly supported by Brian Baum in loving memory of Úna Wilson.

The Gallery would like to thank the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for its ongoing support. For more information, visit www.nationalgallery.ie



Burton, *Self Portrait*.



Burton: *Study for Faust's First Sight of Marguerite*.

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Pictured are Ada Reid, Eabha Snape, Heather Salley, Grace Salley Robin Walsh and Rosie Byrne. The girls all competed in the Under 6 100m at the Roundwood qualifiers for this year's Community Games.

Show your support for Wicklow Hospice as Sunflower Days returns

Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, Wicklow Hospice is delighted to announce that Hospice Sunflower Days is returning for its 35th year next month with the on-street collection taking place on Friday 6th June and Saturday 7th June 2025. Hospice Sunflower Days Ambassadors, Miriam O'Callaghan and Jenny McCarthy, were on hand to officially launch this year's campaign.

As well as the on-street collection, the public can also support Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, Wicklow Hospice by donating online throughout the month of June at www.sunflowerdays.ie. The funds raised will be used to support vital patient and family enhancements for Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, Wicklow Hospice.

Speaking at the launch of the 2025 Hospice Sunflower Days campaign, Eleanor Flew, Director of Fundraising & Communications, Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, Wicklow Hospice, said:

"We are thrilled to launch the 35th Hospice Sunflower Days campaign. We rely so much on the public's support which allow us to continue to provide our vital services. We are calling on everyone from Wicklow to donate what they can, either on-street or on-line this June, as every euro raised really does make a big difference."

Hospice Sunflower Days Ambassador, Miriam O'Callaghan, commented, "The Hospice Sunflower Days campaign is one I am absolutely delighted to support as I have seen firsthand the fantastic work and

care that hospices and homecare services provide to patients and families all across the country. With hospices needing to raise approximately €20 million each year to continue to provide their specialist care, it is so important for the public to show their support by donating on-street or on-line during this year's campaign."

You can support Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, Wicklow Hospice by donating to the on-street volunteers on Friday 6th or Saturday 7th June, or by donating online throughout the month of June via the website, www.sunflowerdays.ie.



Pictured at the launch of this year's campaign are Hospice Sunflower Days Ambassadors Miriam O'Callaghan and Jenny McCarthy with Laragh McGuinness and twins Alya and Yara Kashlan.

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Joseph and Niamh Reid seek permission for (A) conversion of the existing garage into habitable accommodation, (B) construction of a new pitched roof over the existing garage including the addition of 4no. rooflights and (C) construction of a new two-storey extension to the rear of the existing dwelling and all associated site works at 7 Ardmore Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow, A98 K5A0.

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 David O Rorke seek an outline planning permission for a new dwelling house, driveway, packaged effluent disposal system with Biofilter direct discharge polishing filter to current EPA standards, new groundwater well, together with all required site and development works at Knockrobin Farm, Rathnew, 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

I Therese O Rorke seek an outline planning permission for a new dwelling house, driveway, packaged effluent disposal system with Biofilter direct discharge polishing filter to current EPA standards, new groundwater well, together with all required site and development works at Knockrobin Farm, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

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Promoting Wicklow for luxury travel in Germany

Tourism Ireland, together with 11 tourism operators from Ireland - including Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort - recently took part in a luxury roadshow with Loop, a luxury platform, in Germany. The workshops took place in Frankfurt and Munich and continued in Hamburg and Cologne.



Monika Wormann, Tourism Ireland; Shane Browne, The Fota Collection; Denise Corboy, Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort; Klaus Kabelitz, The Doyle Collection; Dorothee Horgan, Tour Partner Group; and Constantin Benesch, Conrad Dublin, at the 'Loop Hours' luxury workshop in Frankfurt.

The 'Loop Hours' workshops in the four German cities provide a valuable platform for Tourism Ireland and partners to connect and do business with German luxury travel buyers. The aim is to inspire the German travel professionals about all that Ireland has to offer and to win a greater share of their business for 2025 and beyond.

Nadine Lehmann, Tourism Ireland's Manager Germany, said: "Aligning with our ambition to deliver increased revenue, Tourism Ireland is working hard to win a greater share of the German luxury travel market. Our participation in the 'Loop Hours' luxury workshops this month provides us with a great opportunity to promote Ireland's luxury tourism offering. The format of pre-scheduled, one-to-one appointments and networking allows our partners to connect with influential German luxury tour operators and travel agents, ensuring Ireland is 'top of mind' for them when recommending destinations to their clients in 2025 and beyond."



Monika Wormann, Tourism Ireland; Denise Corboy, Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort; Dermot O'Neill, AC Tours; Klaus Kabelitz, The Doyle Collection; Constantin Benesch, Conrad Dublin; and Claudia Anton, 360 Travel Design, at the 'Loop Hours' luxury workshop in Munich.

Small Business Unit established

Tánaiste and Fine Gael Leader Simon Harris has welcomed the announcement by Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment Peter Burke TD on the establishment of a dedicated Small Business Unit within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Tánaiste Simon Harris said: "Fine Gael is the party that backs business. Small and medium business are the backbone of our economy and as a proud representative for Wicklow I know how important our businesses are to our communities.

"Today's announcement is a significant milestone in delivering on a core commitment of the Programme for Government that Fine Gael led on. We want to place small businesses at the heart of policy-making and economic planning.

"The establishment of the Small Business Unit reflects our determination to ensure small businesses get the focus, support and

respect they deserve from Government.

"This new Unit will ensure that business voices are heard at the highest level of Government and that policy decisions reflect their day-to-day realities.

"My colleague and friend Minister Burke has shown clear leadership in driving this forward, and I am proud to support him and his work as we take this crucial step to improve the competitiveness, productivity, and future resilience of small enterprises across Ireland in these turbulent times."

The new Unit will implement the SME Test across Government, simplify access to funding and support through the National

Enterprise Hub, and ensure Local Enterprise Offices are properly resourced. It comes on the back of the Government's recent agreement to accelerate development of the Action Plan for Competitiveness and Productivity and introduce targeted measures to respond to the challenges facing Irish SMEs.

Tánaiste Simon Harris concluded: "Fine Gael has led this initiative, and we will continue to be relentless in our support for Irish entrepreneurs, job creators and small business owners. This is not just about policy it's about people, jobs and making sure our communities prosper."

CLASSIFIEDS

THE MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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

Gospel: Luke 11: 27-28

As Jesus was speaking, a woman spoke from the crowd and said to him, 'Blessed is the one who gave you birth and nursed you!' Jesus replied, 'Surely blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it as well.'

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