CLONDALKIN DESERVES A COMMUNITY CENTRE NOW - HIGGINS

The residents and community groups of Clondalkin deserve their own community centre, that's according to local Councillor and Dublin Mid-West General Election candidate, Emer Higgins.

"South Dublin County Council is caught up in what seems like a never-ending legal battle to deliver a new community centre for the Clondalkin area on Orchard Road. This facility was promised over a decade ago and not yet been delivered. There has been some progress made, at last revised legal documentation is being finalised between South Dublin County Council and Kelland Homes so that ownership of the building can be transferred to the South Dublin County Council. I've worked cross-party on this with former Councillors Breda Bonner and Councillor Tony Delaney, and current local Councillors including Trevor Gilligan and Eoin O'Brion to keep the pressure on the Council to progress this," said Cllr. Emer Higgins.

"At last it seems like we are making progress and Councillors have now voted to include funding of €110,000 under the Capital Programme Budget (2020-2022) to assist with fit-out costs.

The plan is for the centre to be used primarily to cater for the needs of active groups in the Clondalkin area, in particular senior citizens and it will be a fantastic addition to the community of Clondalkin," concluded Cllr. Emer Higgins.

SEE OUR EDUCATION FEATURE ON PAGES 20 - 23

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VOTE NO. 1
OUTPATIENT EYE-CARE WAITING LIST CONTINUES TO INCREASE

Outpatient eye-care waiting lists continued to increase in 2019, as Optometrists today called for a greater role in providing public eye-care.

Latest National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) figures to the end of 2019 show that 41,200 people were on the outpatient eye-care waiting list – continuing an upwards trend from 40,600 at the end of 2018 and 39,800 in 2017. Almost 17,300 of these people were waiting more than a year and 12,000 more than 18 months, up from 16,200 and 10,500 respectively a year ago. Furthermore, more than 7,700 people were awaiting inpatient eye procedures.

Association of Optometrists (AOI) Chief Executive Sean McCrave called for better eye-care to be an election issue. “Major delays in diagnosis and treatment are compromising eye health throughout the country. In the South West people can be waiting up to five years for Cataract surgery.” There are 700 community based Optometrists across Ireland who are trained, skilled and have the necessary equipment to make better public eye-care available.

“We have an unsustainable over-reliance on providing public eye-care in Hospitals and HSE Clinics which clearly do not have the capacity to meet demand.

AOI is calling for public eye-care services which Optometrists can provide to be increased including a new ‘National Children’s Eye-care Programme’, which is Optometrist led and ‘National Roll-out’ of the Sligo Post Cataract Scheme. The ‘Sligo Scheme’ is a proven approach being delivered in the North West. It involves greater collaboration between Sligo hospital and Optometrists - and the region has the shortest waiting time for Cataract Surgery (which accounts for a significant volume of the capacity problems).

It is also 50% less expensive to provide appointments in the local community at an Optometrist than in Hospitals and AOI has shown how waiting times can be eliminated while saving up to €32m. Mr. McCrave highlighted the impact poor services are having on people. “Loss of vision impacts greatly on independent living and can lead to the need for carers, care homes, mental health services and unemployment benefits. “Delivering more public eye-care in the community, including a greater role for Optometrists, would greatly improve eye health in Ireland. It would bring Ireland into line with services in other European countries and put in place a sustainable model of care for the future.”

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ICS ASKING VOTERS TO RAISE ISSUE OF CANCER

The Irish Cancer Society (ICS) is asking its supporters across Ireland to bring up the issue of cancer on the doorsteps during the election campaign to improve the experiences of patients and save lives.

Man Qin from Dublin will be speaking to candidates who call to her door about her own experiences with waiting lists: “The Government needs to improve waiting lists for cancer patients, any delay can be agonising,” said the Trinity College student, who is receiving treatment after being diagnosed with a brain tumour last year. The Society is contacting 100,000 of its supporters nationwide about its #CancerMatters campaign and is urging the people of Dublin to make cancer an election issue. Averil Power, Chief Executive of the Irish Cancer Society said: “Unfortunately, there isn’t a family in Ireland that hasn’t been affected by cancer. In Dublin, over 5,800 people are diagnosed with cancer every year. Over 200,000 Irish people will get cancer over the five-year term of the next Dáil. It is critical that our newly elected TDs make cancer a priority and ensure every family affected by the disease has the support they need.”

The Irish Cancer Society has asked candidates to commit to 3 actions that could make a big difference to people in Dublin. Firstly, the Irish Cancer Society wants the quality of life for cancer patients and survivors to improve. To help achieve this it is asking for a reduction in government charges like the €80 inpatient charge for chemotherapy and radiotherapy patients. A lower Drug Payment Scheme threshold, reduced hospital parking charges and greater availability of medical cards for cancer patients would also help ease the financial burden of cancer.

Secondly, it is asking that the National Cancer Strategy and Sláintecare are fully funded so that cancer services are improved, creating a fairer health system for all. Lastly, it says that more needs to be done to protect children from the tobacco and alcohol industries which still use clever marketing to make their products attractive to young people.

INVEST AN ADDITIONAL €1 BILLION IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN

Sinn Féin candidate for Dublin Mid-West, Mark Ward TD, has said that Sinn Féin will invest an additional €1 billion in public transport above what is already committed in the National Development Plan, including doubling investment in rural transport. Deputy Ward said: “We need to increase investment in public transport in both urban and rural communities. “This makes social, economic and environmental sense. “The best way to reduce car dependency and improve connectivity is to provide proper alternatives for people, and to do that we need to invest in rail and bus services, as well as developing positive habit formation by making public transport free to those under-18. “This is essential as we move towards a carbon-neutral society.

“Sinn Féin is committing to investing an additional €1 billion in public transport above what is already committed in the National Development Plan, including doubling investment in rural transport. “This additional investment will deliver: 1. Free public transport for under 18’s - including the School Transport Scheme; 2. Expanded rail services, including the completion of the Western Rail Corridor; 3. Completion of the Cork to Limerick motorway and the A5 from Dublin to Derry/Donegal; 4. Public transport that is wholly accessible to those with disabilities; And 5. Public transport retained in public ownership.”
SOMETIMES SILENCE SPEAKS VOLUMES

I was devastated, I thought I was going to die within months or a year. I kept thinking of my kids and would they cope without me. Imagine living your life without the ability to speak. Imagine not being able to say ‘I love you’ this Valentine’s Day. Unfortunately, that is the fate met by most people living with Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

Valerie O’Carroll (57) from Dublin, was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in October 2019. She says ever since, she is in living in ‘denial’ but is trying to remain positive. It was Valerie’s husband Kieran, who noticed a unique change in his wife of 37 years, her voice. Her voice became quite ‘shaky’ roughly 18 months before her diagnosis. On hearing of her diagnosis the mum of 3, says “I was devastated, I thought I was going to die within months or a year. I kept thinking of my kids and would they cope without me. The fact that my grandchildren were so young would they remember me, my eldest granddaughter Katie is nearly 14 and I really want to be here for her 21st.”

This February they are running our Sponsored Silence campaign #Voice4MND. All we ask is that you stay silent for a minimum of 30 minutes so you can experience what it would be like to lose your voice. Imagine one hour, imagine one day, imagine one week without your voice. We want you to give up your voice so you can experience what it is like for someone with MND.

All you have to do is pick a day and duration for your silence. Then maybe think if you had no voice for a day how would you communicate?

“I suppose everyone has the same feelings not wanting to leave those you love, my job which I love and the people I work with. All of this and so much more. I’m still working and driving and I’m surrounded by very positive people in my job. I’m a very positive person and I intend to stay that way” says Valerie. On giving advice to others, Valerie says “my advice to anyone who is diagnosed recently is to keep positive keep doing what you’ve always done for as long as you can. I truly believe there is a cure out there for this disease and together we’ll find it.”

To get involved in the Sponsored Silence all you have to do is email fundraising@imnda.ie. Spread awareness by sharing your sponsored silence on social media by using #Voice4MND. Nominate friends and families to join you - get your school or work colleagues to take part.

You can also donate to the campaign by texting MND to 50300 to donate €2 (100% of text goes to IMNDA across most network providers. Some providers apply VAT which means a minimum of €1.63 will go to IMNDA. Service Provider: LIKECHARITY. Helpline 076 6805278).

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FREE PARKING
EMPOWER GARDAÍ TO SEIZE AND DESTROY SCRAMBLERS AND QUAD BIKES

Fianna Fáil Spokesperson for National Drug Policy and TD for Dublin Mid-West, John Curran has said that Fianna Fáil will give gardaí powers to seize and destroy scramblers and quad bikes engaged in anti-social behaviour.

Deputy Curran said: “Fianna Fáil will implement legislation to allow gardaí to compulsorily seize scrambler bikes and quads on suspicion of anti-social behaviour.

These bikes will then be destroyed if they are not backed up by appropriate ownership verification. "Gardaí have called for additional powers to deal with this issue. The scourge of loud, intimidating scramblers and quad bikes on public roads and parks is destroying the quality of life in many estates throughout the country.

“Streets and parks that should be local amenities are being transformed into no-go areas by dangerous driving on scramblers,” concluded Deputy Curran.

HUNDREDS LEFT WAITING FOR HOME HELP CARE

Dublin South West election candidate Seán Crowe, has said recent figures released to him show that 230 local people in his constituency are now waiting for home help supports.

Crowe said this is causing huge hardship to vulnerable people and their families. Seán Crowe said “The last government had a freeze on home help hours since last year and as a result the waiting lists for home help has exploded. “7,881 people are waiting on home help across the State and 230 of them live in the Dublin South West area. “The situation is getting worse, not better for many vulnerable people. Many people are entitled to home help but they are not getting their hours.

“It’s like a lottery based on where you live and if you’re lucky you can get the care you need. This is wrong. “The last government wasted huge sums of money on private home help providers instead of putting it into a public home help system. Sinn Féin would do things differently, we want a health system that helps sick people and not to create profit for private companies. “This area of Dublin has a long home help waiting lists. Our communities and vulnerable sick people should be getting home help hours, but it’s not being given to many people who need it. “Immediate action is required to ensure that people living in our communities can access care and stay at home or return home if they are able to manage “A Sinn Féin government would provide home help and home care for these families and for the health service.

“More beds need to be freed up and not occupied by patients who don’t want to stay in hospital and for the hundreds ready and desperate to return home with home help in place.”
According to the latest figures, over 5,400 family home loans are in arrears for two years or more across Dublin, while more than 240 mortgage to rent cases have either been completed or are being actively progressed. The scheme allows mortgage holders at risk of losing their homes to switch to paying a fair income-based affordable rent to their local authority while remaining in their current dwellings.

Fr McVerry also called on the incoming Government to increase the scheme’s eligibility criteria so that a meaningful attempt can be made to solve many of the 27,000 cases where homeowners have been in arrears for at least two years. At present, there are 1,200 active cases in the mortgage to rent process nationwide but Fr. McVerry wants to see that number increased significantly this year. He challenged politicians seeking election to the next Dáil to do “something drastic” to end the spiral of misery for so many families.

“What this housing crisis needs right now is radical thinking. Solutions won’t happen overnight but if the will is there, then it can happen pretty quickly,” said Fr McVerry, a member of the Advisory Board of mortgage to rent operator Home For Life. “If the next government was serious about tackling this huge mortgage debt legacy from the past decade, it should make it illegal over the next three years to evict people without an offer of mortgage to rent. “However, the next government has to sit down and change the thresholds which limit the mortgage to rent scheme. “I am on record as saying that many more families should be included in this scheme because it is the only way for many of them to resolve their current circumstances. “The stress and misery that people are enduring must be relieved and there must be an immediate review of extending the mortgage to rent boundaries.

“It saddens me to think that every week there are thousands of home-dwellers living in needless fear of a knock on the door or a visit from the postman.” He urged those who find themselves in such difficulty not to bury their heads in the sand because the arrears just won’t go away. “Instead, I would encourage them to engage with their local MABS people or their lender so that their cases can be dealt with,” said Fr McVerry. “If they do that, then they should be able to stay in their home if they pay a rent like all local authority tenants.”
TRANSPORT POLICE NEEDED TO TACKLE CRIME ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Sinn Féin candidate for Dublin South West, Seán Crowe, has called for the setting up of a dedicated transport police service to specifically deal with crime on public transport after more complaints of racist and violent behaviour on the Luas. Seán Crowe said: "I have been contacted by a distresses constituent who witnessed vile racist abuse and violent behaviour on the Luas from the Point to Tallaght on a recent Saturday night around 9pm. A group of youths tried to set fire to a woman's hair as shocked passengers looked on. Apparently, they were waiting for 40 minutes before any security or assistance eventually arrived. "As a regular user of this Luas service myself I am shocked at this incident and the lack of security and assistance for this distressed woman. I hope that CCTV cameras from the tram have been provided to An Garda Síochána and I am calling on anyone who witnessed this attack or has any information to pass that information to the Gardaí. "This is just one of a number of incidents that have happened on the Luas and other public transport in recent months. I attend the local Tallaght Bus and Luas Forum that is made up of politicians, Gardaí, Dublin Bus unions and management, and representatives of Luas, and attacks like this are a sick and worrying development. "I believe a dedicated transport police unit is needed to tackle anti-social behaviour on our public transport services."

THOUGHT SPACE BY TOMASZ MADAJCZAK

‘Thought Space’, a performance by Tomasz Madajczak will mark the opening of Mother Tongues Festival 2020 launched Friday 31 January at Rua Red in Tallaght. The performance will marked the opening of Mother Tongues Festival and the work will be on display for the month of February in Rua Red. Tomasz Madajczak was born in Poland in 1979. He completed his education obtaining an MA in Photography and Installation Art in 2003 at University of Find Arts Poznań, Poland. Tomasz emigrated to Ireland shortly afterwards, where he has been creating ever since. Tomasz’ primary interest is in creating immersive multimedia installations, with the use of the space, objects and the presence of the viewers.

For more information see www.ruaired.ie or www.mothertonguesfestival.ie.

MAJOR EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON THE HAZARDS OF CASUAL DRUG TAKING A KEY PRIORITY

TD for Dublin Mid-West, John Curran has said that €3 million euro will be set aside by Fianna Fáil for a major national education campaign. Deputy Curran was speaking following the launch of the Fianna Fáil manifesto in Dublin. "Tackling the country’s crippling drug problem requires major reform and everyday we hear stories of individuals, families and communities that have been left devastated by drugs and the violence which is associated with it. The response from the government has been inadequate and underwhelming. "We plan to introduce legislation that will severely punish those who purchase drugs from children and those who purchase drugs from children and those who purchase drugs from children and those who use minors as cogs in their distribution network. An education campaign will be rolled out nationally to warn the public on the hazards of casual drug taking.

We also plan to increase funding to drugs taskforces over the next two years and then review the situation further.”

“We will also review the methadone treatment protocol as currently more than 10,000 people are currently on a methadone treatment programme,” concluded Deputy Curran.

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Tickets cost €20 plus booking fees and can be booked through https://civictheatre.ticketsolve.com/shows/873609772

For more info see laughterlounge.com or facebook.com/TheLaughterLoungeDublin.

Inland Fisheries Ireland has launched its Sponsorship Programme for 2020 and is now inviting applications from suitable angling events and initiatives in Dublin and nationwide.

The programme, which is one of the funding mechanisms of Inland Fisheries Ireland, awarded funding to 87 angling events and initiatives across the country during 2019, amounting to a total of €30,000 going towards supporting novice anglers and angling tourism.

In Dublin, one initiative was awarded funding as part of the scheme this year and it was the CBS James’ Street Transition Year Fishing Programme in Dublin which was organised by CBS James Street.

Dr Ciaran Byrne, CEO of Inland Fisheries Ireland said: “We are delighted to be able to make financial support available once again in 2020 for projects and events which will support novice and junior anglers and help grow sustainable angling tourism. Our aim is to make angling more accessible to everyone by supporting initiatives which help remove barriers to those looking to try fishing or for younger people who already enjoy the pursuit.”

Suzanne Campion, Head of Business Development at Inland Fisheries Ireland said: “Our 2020 Sponsorship Programme will play an important role in driving angling participation among novice and junior anglers. The Inland Fisheries Ireland Sponsorship Programme has awarded €30,000 per year over the past seven years to angling clubs and groups nationwide to help in the delivery of local angling events.

“In addition to supporting those who are casting for the first time, we also have a unique opportunity to inform novice anglers in conservation and protection of our precious wild fisheries. The Sponsorship Programme offers clubs and associations an incentive to engage overseas anglers to visit our renowned wild fisheries and to enjoy fishing here in a conservation focused manner.”

Applications for funding from the Sponsorship Scheme are now invited from angling clubs, associations or any local group organising an angling initiative. The scheme will remain open for funding applications until February 14th 2020 with applications for equipment, staff support and biosecurity assistance available throughout the year; all applications can be made online at www.fisheriesireland.ie.

Awards will be subject to budget availability and adherence to the scheme requirements.
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South Dublin County Council, An Garda Síochána and Dublin Cycling Campaign are collaborating on a Light up Your Bike awareness campaign which shared some advice and helpful lighting-up tips to cyclists recently in Rathfarnham.

The initiative involves the handing out of free bike lights from the Road Safety Authority in an effort to remind cyclists that bike lights aren’t just a nice accessory, they are a legal requirement during light-up hours (30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise). After dark you must have lights on your bike. If you are stopped by Garda and have no lights, you are liable to receive an on-the-spot fine of €40.

Cyclists are permitted to use lights in either continuous or flashing modes. It is also worth noting that using high-vis accessories (vests, jackets, armbands) is not a valid substitute for lights on your bike, nor is there a legal requirement for wearing high-vis. Top tips for staying lit on your bike!

- Batteries - if you opt for disposable battery powered lights ensure you have enough power left to complete your journey fully lit. However, a better option might be rechargeable battery powered lights. All you must do is ensure they are fully charged each time by disconnecting when required and recharging either at work or home.

- Spares - it’s useful to get into the habit of carrying some spare lights or spare batteries with you - especially if you have a slightly longer commute. Spare lights don’t need to be expensive and it might be a good idea to keep some at work, so you don’t get caught out on the way home. Remember to recycle your old batteries.

Beware Thieves - if your lights are detachable then never, ever leave them attached to your bike while it’s unattended. Most thieves are opportunists so don’t give them the opportunity. Dynamos - If you are buying a new bike, you may consider getting a dynamo fitted. Modern hub dynamos give you good light with minimal effort and no need to worry about theft or the batteries running out.

Ally Henary, Road Safety Officer, South Dublin County Council, says: ‘Informing cyclists of their obligations to staying lit when cycling at night is such an important road safety initiative. There is no substitute to having working lights on your bike and I’d like to remind cyclists of the importance to staying lit during the winter months. Kevin Baker, Chairperson of Dublin Cycling Campaign, says, “We are delighted to have South Dublin County Council’s support for the Light Up Your Bike campaign. Lights are an essential accessory when cycling at night especially during the winter when the nights are much longer.”

Sinn Féin Housing spokesperson Eoin Ó Broin has called on Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy to explain the interest rate hike for the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan.

Deputy Ó Broin said: “As typical of Minister Murphy we hear of interest rate changes to this government backed mortgage scheme via media reports. “Based on the report it would seem that borrowers are facing a rate increase from 2% for a 25 year on to 2.74% and from 2.25% for a 30-year loan to 2.995%.”

“These loans are for home owners who struggled to get a mortgage from banks and now fine Gaelt is happy to increase the costs on workers and families. “Over the lifetime of these mortgages, it will add €20,000 to €30,000 to the cost of finance for working people.

“That is not good enough. “A Sinn Féin Housing Minister would prioritise the delivery of affordable purchase homes, costing less than €250,000, instead of increasing the debt burden.”

Dublin teachers in primary and second level schools, whose pupils take part in the annual Texaco Children’s Art Competition, are reminded that the closing date for receipt of entries this year is Friday, 28th February next. Last year over 5,500 pupils from schools in Co. Dublin submitted entries to the Competition. Now in its 66th year, the Texaco Children’s Art Competition is widely acknowledged as the longest running arts sponsorship in Ireland.
TRIBUTE TO TEMPLEOGUE MEN’S SHED

Local Independent Minister Katherine Zappone says the Men’s Shed network is playing a huge role by providing an opportunity for socialising, networking and the use of talents. The Dublin South West TD made the remarks as she joined members of the Templeogue Men’s Shed for a sing-a-long and a jig.

Minister Zappone was given a rousing welcome by the Shed’s gifted musicians who greeted her with a barnstorming rendition of Dirty Old Town before she was whisked off her feet to dance a jig. The Independent candidate in the forthcoming General election described the movement as a ‘generous, innovative and empathic initiative that has swept through the country’. She praised the courage of the men present for daring to do something different and positive and for coming together from their diverse backgrounds, work histories and areas of expertise. As both a feminist and an admirer of the Men’s Shed movement, she remarked that the phenomenal success of the sheds as “almost counter-revolutionary” in the best possible sense.

She was presented with a unique beautiful handmade wooden pen, crafted in the shed’s workshop where the unique pens are lovingly made from Irish native woods such as white oak and purple pine. Before leaving, she was persuaded to giving the men a song herself, Sloop John B made famous by the Beach Boys, describing the opportunity to have a sing-song with them lifted the spirit and was ‘a great gift to me’.

FREE DOSE OF MMR VACCINE TO 11-30 YEAR OLDS

The HSE has urged anyone aged between 11 and 30 years of age who has not had two doses of the MMR vaccine, or who are unsure of their vaccine status, to avail of the offer of a free dose of the MMR vaccine due to a significant rise in cases of mumps.

Children aged 11-18 and adults aged up to 30 have been particularly affected by the mumps outbreak so it is vital that parents and young adults are aware that the MMR vaccine is the only way to stop the spread of mumps, according to public health specialist at the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre, Dr Suzanne Cotter.

“Secondary schools and third level institutions have seen the highest incidences of mumps. During 2019 the number of mumps cases continued to rise and we saw 2,762 cases compared with 573 cases the previous year. To date in 2020, 253 cases have already been notified to the HSE. “Vaccination with MMR vaccine is the only way to protect against mumps.

A third dose of MMR won’t cause any harm so anyone unsure of whether they have had two doses or not can safely receive the vaccine again. “Mumps is a highly infectious and dangerous illness which spreads very easily, particularly in homes, creches, playgroups, camps, schools and universities.

It can be a serious illness and can have life changing repercussions in some instances. “Parents and young adults should speak with their GP or student health service and get the vaccine free of charge for their child or themselves if needed. “At the moment, 91% of children in Ireland have received one dose of MMR by 24 months of age. While this is a good uptake by international standards it is below the target of 95% to prevent cases of measles and mumps outbreaks.”

Dublin Rural Development Programme

LEADER 2014-2020

Final Call for Environmental Projects

Dublin Rural LEADER on behalf of Dublin Rural LAG invites Voluntary Community Groups, Charities, Medium Enterprises, SME’s to submit Expressions of Interest for funding under the LEADER / Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

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- Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources (e.g. Rainwater Harvesting or use of Greywater for fertiliser and general washing)
- Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity (e.g. Upgrading Parks and river walks, establishment of nature corridors, habitat creation and planting of native species)
- Development of Renewable Energy (e.g. solar power, biomass heating, community farms and community-based heating systems)

Please visit our website for further information www.dubliruralleader.ie

The Targeted / Time limited call is a 2-stage process.

Stage 1 – Submission of Expression of Interest
Should you wish to be considered under this call you must submit a completed Expression of Interest (EOI) form to Dublin LEADER Partnership CLG, DSV House, Swords Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin, K67K8Y2, by close of business on February 28th, 2020. EOI forms and further information is available on www.dublinruralleader.ie. You can also contact us by phone on 01-807 42 82 or email amanoli@fingalleaderpartnership.ie.

Stage 2 – Application Stage
Applicants will be contacted to inform them if their Expression of Interest is deemed eligible under the Rural Development Programme. Projects that are eligible will be invited to submit a full application for grant assistance. It is intended to hold a workshop(s) to advise and support participants in the preparation of this application.

Funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development

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‘From our family to yours’

Wiltshire Farm Foods is a very large food company based in Wiltshire in the UK. Here in Ireland, Homecare Foods Ltd who are based in Greencrook Business Park in Rathcoole, Co. Dublin look after the Leinster region for Wiltshire Farm Foods. Our family business is owned by Richard & Anne French who have over 30 years’ experience in the food industry. Our passion is to look after our customers and to ensure that no one goes hungry. ‘We cover all meal times: Breakfast, Tea, Snack, Lunch and Dessert’ With over 300 dishes to choose from our menu, there is a delicious option to suit everyone’s taste so you will not get tired of eating the same meals week in, week out. Why not try one of our 5-day menu packs and enjoy; Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding, Chicken Breast with Stuffing, Irish Stew, Chicken & Vegetable Casserole, and topped with sweet desserts; Bread & Butter Pudding, Strawberry Trifle, Apple Pie & Custard, Rice Pudding. That’s 4 meals and 4 desserts all for only €19.95, a delicious offer not to be missed.

‘Dinners to your door’

We deliver delicious frozen meals for you to enjoy in the comfort of your home. Ready to cook straight from the freezer in the microwave or oven, so you can enjoy a hot dinner in as little as 20 minutes. An ideal option for days you don’t feel like cooking! Our meals are made to the very highest standard, and then freshly frozen and packaged to lock in the goodness. If our food doesn’t hit the spot, we’ll replace it absolutely free on your next delivery. We also cater for anyone who needs a special diet and may have difficulty with swallowing food. We believe everyone should look forward to a tasty dinner, regardless of their needs and our smaller foods range offers a safe and easy way to enjoy nutritious meals at the right texture for you.

‘Healthy tips for the New Year’

With meals starting from as little as €3.50 for a dinner option, our menu is created to suit everyone’s budget and with 3 different portion sizes; mini meals, regular meals and hearty dinners, we’re sure to please every appetite. We deliver weekly in the Leinster region and there is no contract or commitment. You can order as often or as little as you like! There’s no delivery charge, simply delicious food delivered to your home or even direct to your freezer!

‘How the service work’s’

We can send you a FREE Brochures to browse through at home and or you can browse our online menu and choose from over 300 dishes to suit your taste and diet requirements. Call us on (01) 473 5555 or place your order online at www.wiltshirefarmfoods.ie Our local team will deliver your order for free, ready for you to enjoy.

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Order your FREE Brochure today and explore the full range of meals and desserts available.
Three Bears Sculpture Unveiled

The three bears sculpture were recently unveiled at Tallaght Hospital by Minister Katherine Zappone. The local T.D. commented at the unveiling "It is an honour to be here to welcome the three bears to their new home! Following the generous donation of the bears by the Crosbie family I was determined that they would be placed in a location where they would be accessible to children.

The bears, the work of sculptor Patrick O’Reilly, have been a familiar sight in Dublin for over twenty years. Originally bringing a smile to both concert goers and passing motorists at the Point Depot, before being retired into storage, they have now settled into this, the most appropriate of homes Tallaght Hospital. Zappone added "it is my hope that they will bring cheer and enjoyment to young patients and visitors alike for at least another two-decades and beyond.

The bears have brothers of course, in Greystones and down in Adare where they are well established local landmarks. All three locations are now linked by sharing these most unique and beautiful sculptures. When I see them it reminds me of childhood, those special years of joy, play and learning. It is my hope that children facing health challenges or coming here to recover will share that joy.

I want to thank Lucy Nugent and all the team at Tallaght University Hospital for wholeheartedly getting behind this project. It has taken a lot of hard work and dedication to bring us to this moment. It would not have been possible to bring the bears here without the support of everyone at Tallaght University Hospital.

The arrival of the bears is not only an opportunity to celebrate remarkable art work which will be part of the community for a long time to come, but also to reflect on the important role the hospital plays in serving local people of all ages, often as they go through a difficult time. The Dublin South West election candidate concluded “We must never take our local hospital for granted - neither must we take the dedication and the skills of all who work here to help patients and their families through illness and injury.

It is a tribute to the hardworking teams across this teaching hospital that it is able to handle and care for 420,000 patient attendances a year with one of the busiest Emergency Departments. The patients are drawn from a catchment area served by some 200 GPs. Truly remarkable figures. As an outgoing Independent Minister representing those communities which make up a huge part of that catchment area can I put on record my words of thanks.

When I received your kind invite to join you on this occasion I wanted to come and say that - no matter what was happening politically! But it is not about politics, there will be enough of that in the coming days, is it is about celebrating and wishing the three bears many happy years in their new home, where they will be able to brighten the days of tens of thousands of children. Inspire and encourage the dedicated professionals who work here and spreading some joy to all who see them. With that let me declare the Three Bears are home! Their new home at Tallaght University Hospital."
The Four Districts Woodland Habitat Group recently invited the Dublin Mid-West election candidates and local councillors to walk the Draft Master Plan for South Dublin County Council (SDCC) owned lands in Rathcoole to see the context of the plan on the ground in the local park and surrounding land.

Of particular concern to the Group is the proposal in the draft plan to build on 10 ha of wild woodland area of native trees such as willow, birch, hawthorn and blackthorn. There is also a tributary of the Camac running through this valuable Woodland.

The group has been gaining solid support from Rathcoole residents, with a petition signed by over 4500 people calling for the Woodland to be preserved and protected. Many residents have written to councillors seeking their support. The campaign has the support of a number of councillors, including the Green Party and a sizeable number of independents. However, most of the 40 councillors have not indicated if they are going to support the protection of the woodland and encourage SDCC to find an alternative location for the proposed and much needed housing. Alistair Mullan of the group said “Even though it’s a local issue within the Clondalkin electoral area, progression of the Masterplan will ultimately be decided by the votes of all 40 councillors. There should be no hesitation by councillors. They need to stand up and be counted on this vital issue. This woodland needs protecting for the community, the local biodiversity area, and as a part of the nature solution to climate change.”

To follow the campaign see facebook.com/FourDistrictsWoodland.

WALK AND SEE THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR RATHCOOLE

O’CONNOR WELCOMES INNOVATION CENTREPLANS

Councillor Charlie O’Connor has welcomed progress on plans for the development of an Innovation Centre on Tallaght Town Centre lands and pursued the matter once again at the January meeting of the Tallaght Area Committee of which he is Chairman.

He told the meeting that this development is very important for the Tallaght region and the community is anxious to see plans come to fruition. The Council’s CEO provided Charlie O’Connor with the following detailed response “South Dublin County Council (SDCC) procured a study for the development of new enterprise/innovation space with associated enterprise support services in the County in 2017. This Report was presented to the members of the County Council and its recommendations were endorsed following a number of briefings.

Primary recommendation is that a 3,000 sq. metre enterprise/innovation space be provided in the County and the preferred location for an innovation/enterprise space based on criteria within the report is the Tallaght Corridor, i.e., between the ITT (now TU Dublin, Tallaght Campus) and Tallaght University Hospital. SDCC sought tenders on OJEU for:- 1. Project Advisor and Centre Management Team and following evaluation process selection of Oxford Innovation was completed in August and appointed September 2019 and 2. Architect-led Design Team and McCulloughMulvin Architects appointed October 2019

Meetings with SDCC and the Design Team commenced in November 2019 and this project is progressing delivery through Planning and subject to same will continue to construction stage during 2020. South Dublin has ambitious plans to become one of the leading locations in Ireland for Innovative and Technology rich firms and the delivery of this ‘flagship facility’, a very visible hub of innovative business growth, will act as an aspirational ‘landmark’ to students, residents, local and the wider community and become a focal point for driving forward innovation and enterprise activity in and around the County.”

According to Charlie O’Connor, who is a former Chairman of Get Tallaght Working, this is a good news story for Tallaght and he has undertaken to continue to press for the early delivery of the Centre.

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Innocent’s ‘Big Grow’ is back

Innocent’s ‘Big Grow’ is back, recruiting a whole new bunch of the littlest veggie growers with the mission to help kids to eat more fresh fruit and veg. Now in its 9th year, Innocent will once again partner with the growing experts at GIY and give primary school kids the chance to grow their own tasty food. The campaign has been developed closely with teachers and educational specialists to give aspiring junior gardeners the information and tools to create their own little vegetable patch in their garden, classroom or even on their windowsill.

Speaking about the partnership GIY founder Michael Kelly said, “Studies show that children who grow their own food are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables and show higher levels of knowledge about nutrition. The children not only learn the science of growing, they also experience the joy of growing and eating their own food. GIY calls this ‘Food Empathy’, which is a deeper connection with food, and is proven to lead to a healthier life long-term. We are delighted to work with innocent on this once again and we hope these life lessons stay with our growers into adulthood.”

Joining the campaign this year is food writer Lilly Higgins, the friendly foodie behind the book, ‘Stuff I Make, Bake and Love’ and comedy TV show ‘Fancy Vittles’, hosted with her sister Maeve. Speaking about the initiative, Lilly Higgins said “I am so excited to be involved in the innocent Big Grow. This campaign is doing something very important - building a lifelong love of healthy food with children. If we can instil a love of homegrown produce with kids at an early age, we are giving them a valuable skill for life!”

The innocent Big Grow is open for primary schools across the country to apply for a free Grow Kit for their school. Schools can join the growvolution by visiting innocentbiggrow.com. This year, for the first time, the school judged to have cultivated the most impressive grows will receive €1,000 towards their school garden, adding an extra incentive for the nation’s little growers to get involved and grow crazy. Innocent and GIY have committed to making Growing Kits for schools available to almost 60,000 children in schools across Ireland. The Grow Kits are a great resource for kids taking part.

They include 3 packs of seeds, 32 cups, 32 compost discs, teachers resource booklet, wallchart and star grower badges.

To join #TheBigGrow conversation and pick up tips and advice - follow @innocent on Twitter and @innocentireland on Instagram and Facebook. Register on innocentbiggrow.com.

Pictured L-R are Jamie Thompson (10), Annabelle Vaughan (9), Hanna Lechnio (10) and Jacob Vaughan (10). Pic credit: Mark Stedman.

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CLONDALKIN STUDENTS TOP OF THE CLASS IN GOAL CHANGEMAKERS AWARD

Third-class students from Our Lady Queen of the Apostles National School in Clondalkin, Dublin, have been honoured by humanitarian aid agency, GOAL, for demonstrating their contribution and commitment to helping achieve the Global Goals.

The pupils were named as joint winners in the GOAL Changemakers Competition for highlighting the issue of food waste and encouraging food suppliers to their school to use biodegradable packaging. The competition invited primary school students all over Ireland to share their actions for global change.

Inspired by Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai's story of the hummingbird to “do the best that I can”, the children decided to focus on Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production for their Changemakers entry.

Shocked by the amount of food packaging and food waste discarded daily in their school they lobbied their school food suppliers to provide reusable utensils and to change to biodegradable packaging. The pupils also urged their school to buy quality Irish products and to continue their support of Fairtrade. The students have vowed to continue their campaign for biodegradable packaging on their lunches and to encourage the use of quality Irish food so that their actions will impact on people in the Global South.

The students composed two songs about their desire to not use plastic at school and a second one which they sang about changes we can all make to be more conscious of our consumption and damage to the environment. Third class teacher, Paula Frances Galvin said: “The children have been motivated on this topic for a long time and it is fantastic that their efforts have been recognised by a global organisation like GOAL. The children strive to live up to Mahatma Gandhi’s quote ‘Be the change you want in the world’ and their commitment is admirable to all ages.”

The judging panel, comprised of Newstalk presenter Jonathan McCrea, children’s author Sarah Webb, activist and founder of Flossie and the Beach Cleaners, Flossie Donnelly, and GOAL deputy-CEO Mary Van Lieshout, were blown away by the quality of the entries. Jonathan McCrea said: “It was great to see such a variety of entries and innovative ideas from young people committed to helping achieve Global Goals. The high quality of entries made judging difficult, and it is clear we have some amazing changemakers among our young people.”

GOAL Deputy CEO, Mary Van Lieshout, said: “The judges were in awe of how children are making a difference at home and in their schools every day. Young people are the future and it is imperative that they believe in and promote a sustainable, fair future. We must equip them with tools to make that happen. We want a planet earth that’s sustainable and here for future generations and it is inspiring to see our young people taking the lead on this.” The children were overjoyed to come out on top of all the school who entered: “We are so grateful that GOAL liked our project, we worked so hard but enjoyed it so much! We were like the hummingbird from the story and we did the best that we could.”

For more information https://www.goalglobal.org/changemakers/

Pictured Teacher Paula Frances Galvin with third class pupils

STUDENT SPORT IRELAND RUGBY CUPS

Pictured (back row L-R) Garda College’s Cormac Ryan, DCU’s Oisin McCormack, IT Carlow’s Aiden McDonald, TUD’s Martin Murphy, ALT’s Alex Porter, LIT’s Alan Fitzgerald, Queens’ Andy Walker, GM1’s Andrew Paton and UU’s Tony Bloomer (Middle row L-R) DCU’s Emma Lacky, UCD’s Alix Cuneen, UL’s Meabh Lewis and NUI Galway’s Ella Sintott (front row L-R) Chairperson IRFU Third Level Rugby Committee Kevin Dineen, Chairperson of SSI Carmel Lynch and SSI Hon. Member Brendan Johnston

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Thanks to the striking front of the new Audi e-tron, you will leave a lasting impression in the rear-view mirror of the vehicle ahead. One of the most eye-catching elements is the single-frame octagon-style grill with metal trim, while getting comfortable in the car’s luxury, and supportive seats is never an issue.

Impressive Battery Range;
With the Audi e-tron, electric efficiency sacrifices nothing to performance. An electric motor at the front and one at the rear jointly produce 402bhp (300kW) and a whopping 664Nm of torque for swift forward motion. Unlike a combustion-powered vehicle, the acceleration response is almost instant, providing a thrilling sensation in every respect. The e-tron has a range of up to 391 kilometres on a single charge, and with an ever-expanding charging network, you can say goodbye to range anxiety. The e-tron can be charged in a number of convenient ways: at home using a domestic socket, or specially fitted wall box, or on the road at a high-powered charging station. Where available, the e-tron can be recharged to 80% in just 30 minutes at a 150kW charge station and 100% in 50 minutes. Audi is working on expanding the charging infrastructure in Ireland through a joint venture called IONITY. This will see six charging stations built on main routes, with each station having six 150kW fast charge points.

New Design Language;
With the new Audi e-tron comes the introduction of a new design language for the electric age. Details such as the daytime running light signature, no exhaust pipes and stitching on the seats are all reminiscent of an electric circuit board, giving a clear signal that the e-tron is fully electric. One of the main design highlights are the optional ‘virtual wing mirrors’. A small camera processes the image digitally and shows this on high-contrast 7-inch OLED display on the inside of both front doors. The driver can adjust the display using the touchscreen function, just like a smartphone.

Test Car;
My test car was an Audi e-tron Sport 55 Quattro (265kW), which looked amazing in Galaxy Blue metallic paint. Equally amazing is the list of standard equipment, with key features such as 20” 5-arm dynamic design alloy wheels, adaptive air suspension, Audi departure warning, Audi smartphone interface, Audi sound system, Audi virtual cockpit, cruise control with speed limiter, electric boot lid, emergency call service, front & rear park assist, heated front seats, leather upholstery, LED headlamps with headlamp washers, MMI Navigation Plus, and power seat adjustment for the front seats with memory function, along with a whole host of other comfort, convenience, safety and technology features. Also standard are two charge ports - one on either side of the car - along with semi-autonomous drive features. When on the move, the new e-tron is exceptionally quick (0-100km/h in just 5.7-seconds), supremely refined, serenely quiet, and possesses the outstanding build quality that Audi is famous for. Audi’s clever regenerative braking system harnesses energy which would otherwise be lost, and transfers this energy into enhanced battery range. Convenient, steering wheel-mounted paddles enable the e-tron driver to adjust the intensity of the regenerative braking, and it is a system that is particularly intuitive to use. The top speed of the new e-tron is electronically limited to 198km/h in an effort to preserve a usable all-electric range.

Pricing;
The e-tron is Audi’s first all-electric production car, and is just the start of Audi’s all-electric journey, with many more exciting cars in the pipeline for the iconic German premium car manufacturer. The e-tron slots in between Audi’s desirable Q5 and Q7 SUV’s in terms of size and interior space, and wears its Audi badge with justifiable pride. Pricing for the new Audi e-tron Sport 55 Quattro starts at €101,750 (including delivery, and a 4-year service plan, but excluding grants of €5,000 VRT relief and a €5,000 SEAI grant), with annual road tax costing just €120. A host of optional extras are available for the ultimate in premium brand electric SUV personalisation.
In November 2019, ŠKODA Ireland announced a new age diversity initiative called Simply Older, Still Clever, an initiative that aims to bring older individuals back into the workplace. With the help of hotelier and media personality Francis Brennan, ŠKODA Ireland launched the campaign last November and has enjoyed its growing success since.

ŠKODA believe the older generation possesses skills that can be utilised to fulfill customer-facing duties in showrooms across their dealer network. The motor industry workforce is under-resourced in January and February where 43% of annual new car sales are delivered to customers.

It is in these peak periods ŠKODA believe they can utilise the retired skillset of the older generation to take the pressure off dealerships while still maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and service. Since the campaign launch, numerous Simply Older, Still Clever positions have been filled nationwide.

Rafiq Sumar has stepped into the role of Simply Older, Still Clever Ambassador at Pilsen Auto. Rafiq has lead a vast, exciting and challenging career in the aviation industry throughout his life, beginning in ticketing and working through the ranks in several countries. His longest stint was over 17 years with Saudi Arabian Airlines. As part of his new Ambassador role, Rafiq has been fulfilling vehicle test drives, vehicle demonstrations and customer hand overs.

Speaking on the campaign’s success, Pilsen Auto Dealer Principal, Mick Kenny said, “We are delighted to participate in such a unique initiative, especially seeing the positive reactions from the wider dealer network and the public. Rafiq has already been a huge asset to the team. We see our brand as paving the way for other Irish businesses, as we’ve also started to see other companies in other industries adopting similar initiatives.” With recruitment complete, Simply Older, Still Clever Ambassadors will be on hand across the dealer network from January onwards.
SOUTHSIDE/NORTHSIDE COVERED

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MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. Special mention to the United Hearts of Jesus and Mary for great favour witness received.

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