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FREE SCHOOL BOOKS FOR PUPILS OF PRIMARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS ON WAY FOR SEPTEMBER

Children attending primary and special schools are set to benefit from free school books from September, a local TD has said. Deputy Emer Higgins, TD for Dublin Mid West, was speaking following the launch of the scheme by Minister for Education Norma Foley at Scoil Áine Naofa, Lucan and outlined details of the hugely significant funding package which will eliminate the cost to families for all school books, workbooks and copybooks at all primary and special schools within the free education scheme.

“This is a landmark funding package, totalling €50 million, which was secured in Budget 2023 and fulfils government’s

commitment to have a first class education system, which was contained in the Fine Gael 2020 General Election manifesto,” Deputy Higgins said. “I am delighted that the delivery on this promise to ease the burden of back to school costs for families has come to pass. The scheme will benefit more than 558,000 pupils nationally, who are attending approximately 3,230 primary schools, including over 130 special schools.

Deputy Higgins continued: “Closer to home, I’m very pleased that so many children and families in our local communities will benefit from this package, which gives parents and guardians one less back to school expense to worry

about, as well as saving them the time that traditionally would be spent across the Summer going to suppliers to try to buy everything on the booklist.

“Grant payments are being made this week, which means schools will now have the funding required to cover the costs of providing all these items well in advance of the start of the next school year. It’s important to also acknowledge that this provision, as well as easing the Cost of Living burden of families, means that every child will be equal in the classroom, with access to all the required materials which can and will only enhance their educational experience,” Deputy Higgins concluded.

Tallaght Pupils Win In Travel Challenge Awards



Green Schools Big Travel Challenge Awards 2023 were held at a ceremony in Dublin Zoo recently. Pictured: Ireland’s Walking School of the Year 2023 St. Marks Junior School, Tallaght. L-R Harper Kavanagh (8) Scott McMahon (8) Enilka Zgraja (9) and Eugenie Kabeya (7) pictured at the awards ceremony. Pic credit: 1IMAGE/Bryan Brophy

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FRIENDS OF THE CAMAC COMMUNITY CLEAN UP ON EARTH DAY

Clondalkin Friends of the Camac Group participated in the Dublin Community Earth Day Clean Up on Saturday the 22nd of April by holding an Earth Day Camac River Cleanup in Clondalkin Park all along the banks of the river. Despite the awful wet weather on the day the event was well attended with 14 volunteers helping out to collect the litter.

and plastic bottles which were delivered for recycling to Round Towers GAA Club, while two bags of glass bottles were brought to the The Mill Shopping Centre Bring Centre. This meant that of the eight bags collected four were fully recycled and avoided going to landfill, which is great for the environment.

A total of eight bags of litter was collected, of these only four were general waste, two bags were drinks cans

The statistics for 2022 cleanup days show that the group have collected a total of one hundred and thirty two and a half (132.5) bags

of litter, fifty two (52) were general waste, fifty four (54) were drinks cans and plastic bottles and twenty-six and a half (26.5) were glass bottles, thus saving eighty and a half (80.5) bags from going to landfill.

Thanks to all the volunteers who turn up regularly to monthly cleanup days.

The group welcomes new volunteers to come along to help to protect, preserve and enhance the Camac in Clondalkin, its heritage, wildlife and ecosystem, for present and future generations. Pickers, bags, bibs and gloves will be

provided. Many hands make light work.

Friends of the Camac meet in the outer car park of Clondalkin Leisure Centre at 9.45am for a 10.00am start. The Eircode is D2E283. The next scheduled Clean Top is

on the second Saturday in May which falls on 13th May, please note in your diary.

Finally thanks to South Dublin County Council, Lawpro & Waterways Ireland for their assistance in the group's efforts.



Pic credit Tommy Keogh



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MINISTER FOR HOUSING TURNS SOD ON NEW COST RENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Mayor of South Dublin, Cllr. Emma Murphy, along with Darragh O'Brien, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, today officially turned the sod to commence a new development of 133 cost rental apartments at Belgard Square North in Tallaght town centre. This South Dublin County Council project represents the first standalone cost rental development by a local authority in Ireland. The development consists of three studio apartments, sixty-four one-bedroom apartments, sixty-three two-bedroom apartments and three three-bedroom apartments to be delivered in three blocks, ranging from three to eight storeys together with community space and high-quality communal and public open space.

The central location is ideal for the rental market with proximity to major employment, retail and education centres as well as excellent transport links and amenities, including the soon to be completed Work IQ Innovation Centre and the Innovation Square

public plaza, both of which are also current Council projects. Building contractors JJ Rhatigan have been appointed by the Council for the construction works with the development expected to be completed and occupied in 2025.

The project is being funded by South Dublin County Council with support through the Affordable Housing Fund from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under Housing for All, the national housing plan. Cost rental housing provides affordable rented accommodation to people on middle incomes who are above the threshold for social housing but have difficulty affording private rented accommodation. The rent payable by tenants in this development will be directly linked to the cost of building, managing and maintaining the homes and will be at discounted to at least 25% below local market rents through the Affordable Housing Fund subsidy.

Speaking at the official sod turning, Minister O'Brien said "I am delighted to turn

the sod on the State's first Local Authority led Cost Rental Scheme. Cost Rental is a new form of tenure here in Ireland, it's where rents are charged which cover the cost of delivering, managing and maintaining the homes only, so they are not driven by profits. They are safe and secure rental homes where people can set down their roots if they want to, safe in the knowledge the State is backing them. Under Housing for All we will see at least 18,000 Cost Rental homes delivered across the country by our Local Authorities, our AHBs and the LDA. I want to highly commend Danny and South Dublin County Council for making this a reality," he concluded.

Mr. Danny McLoughlin, Chief Executive, South Dublin County Council said "Quality, affordable rental accommodation is now and will continue to be a critical element of Government led housing delivery policy. This is the first of many such developments planned by South Dublin County Council. It is a quality development, in what we believe will be a highly



sought after location within this new Innovation District. The Elected Councillors who have supported this innovative project are to be commended for taking this first important step in what is a new broader housing delivery role for local government."

Ger Ronayne, Chief Executive Officer, JJ Rhatigan & Company said "We are delighted to get started on this much-needed housing project for the people of Tallaght. We understand the urgency of the need for high-quality affordable housing and we

are committed to delivering all 133 apartments by mid-2024. Our use of precast concrete and other modern methods of construction will allow us to speed up delivery, and we are excited to see the positive impact this development will have on the community and the wider area into the future."

Cllr. Emma Murphy, Mayor of South Dublin County Council added "Today is a landmark day in South Dublin as we show leadership in the provision of housing and are showing innovative housing solutions for the people of South Dublin. As we turn

the sod on the first Local Authority led Cost Rental Scheme in the State, we are aiming to provide a Cost Rental option, an affordable long-term rental option to residents in South Dublin who want to work and live in this community.

It is a pivotal day for people in Tallaght and throughout the County as we embrace this new model here in South Dublin. I am delighted that the project has the full backing of Minister Darragh O'Brien and his office which will allow for people to embed and thrive here in our local community in Tallaght."



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COOPERATION TO PROGRESS PILOT LIGHTING TRANSITION WELCOMED

Dublin Mid-West Sinn Féin councillor, Derren Ó Bradaigh has welcomed a recent response to an official question posed seeking details on the progress to upgrade our public lighting system to the far more energy efficient light emitting diode (LED) lights. Ó Brádaigh, a councillor for the Lucan-Palmerstown-Fonthill local electoral area said "The public street light transition programme began approximately 7 years ago and to date, the council has upgraded 17,500 of the

existing low-pressure sodium (SOX) public lamps to the far more energy efficient LED lights, however 8,000 of these SOX public lights remain. Challenges have arisen during the most recent phase, as these older lights are not compliant with current regulations. Resolving this issue with ESB Networks has been slow and has impacted on South Dublin County Council's own upgrade schedule.

"Meeting targets is not only in the interest of the taxpaying public but importantly forms part of the council's own commitments on climate action plans. LED light bulbs use up to 85% less electricity and emit minimum heat waste, converting this energy to light instead, so the benefits for our community and wider society are there for all to see.

"I have taken a keen interest in monitoring the ongoing progress on this programme raising questions intermittently at area committee meetings. My understanding now is that the council have been

working with ESN on this issue and finally signed an agreement just recently on how they can jointly address the technical and safety issues presented by these lights. The council have now informed me that they can move forward again with the programme in conjunction with ESNB.

"To test the agreed new way of working with the ESNB, the council have agreed to progress upgrades in three estates across the county in locations that cover all manner of issues which they are likely to face as they upgrade their remaining stock. These three pilot estates include works to Ashwood in Clondalkin, Redwood in Kilnamanagh and Rathfarnham Wood. Work in this regard will commence in April and be progressed over coming months.

"Regarding the continued maintenance of the remaining SOX fittings, these are now obsolete, and it is extremely difficult to source parts to maintain them. To address this problem, the council have been able to harvest lamps and other

maintenance parts from the old SOX fittings that are retired as part of the upgrade/replacement as the programme progresses. As a priority, work can be accelerated to repair all the outages that are reported".

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Cllr Madeleine Johansson

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OUR LIBRARY OUR FUTURE



Pictured at County Library, Tallaght for the Launch of "Our Library, Our Future" were (left to right) Paul Fusco, County Librarian, Mayor Emma Murphy and Tallaght Cllr Charlie O' Connor.

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TYMON FOOD & CRAFT MARKET 2023

South Dublin County Council is delighted to announce that Tymon Park Food & Craft Market is returning for a second year this summer, after the great success of last year.

The offerings available include street food, crafts, artisan produce and entertainment, providing all the ingredients for a fun filled family day out.

Mayor of South Dublin County Council, Cllr Emma Murphy said "I am absolutely delighted to see the Tymon Park Market return this year. Last year the markets proved to be a fantastic social space for residents and visitors to the county.

The markets showcase some wonderful craft, food and artisan products and highlight some of the

amazing up-and-coming food producers supported by the Local Enterprise Office South Dublin. I encourage the local communities to come along to support and experience all these markets have to offer."

The market will operate every Saturday from 11am to 4pm and will be held for the first time on Saturday the 6th of May. Tymon Park

Food and Craft Market will be located in Tymon Park, Castletymon Road, Tallaght, next to the playground. The market will promote local enterprise and develop a sense of community by utilising where possible local producers and crafts people, including Local Enterprise Office South Dublin (LEO) start-up clients.

"LEO South Dublin is delighted to collaborate with Dublin's Outdoors to utilise and develop this opportunity. Outdoor markets offer a fantastic opportunity for our exciting new local food and craft producers to showcase their new products and benefit from the feedback of local consumers." said Tom Rooney, Head of Enterprise at Local Enterprise Office South Dublin.

Outdoor markets support the promotion of the local community, enhance the attraction of our parks as valuable amenities and improve the tourism offering in the County, which is why South Dublin County Council and Dublin's Outdoors is excited to welcome you to

our market this summer!

If you are a small business and want to be involved in the market then

you can email Anne at dublinmarketsevents@gmail.com or message them on their Facebook and Instagram.

O'CONNOR WELCOMES BUS DECISION

Tallaght Councillor, Charlie O'Connor, has welcomed confirmation by Dublin Bus "that normal services will now resume in the West Tallaght community of the 27/56A/65B and 77A services". He said that, as a long time member of the Dublin Bus/Luas Community Forum, he continued to work hard with colleagues and stakeholders to ensure that Bus services to West Tallaght be preserved and protected.

At the recent Public Meeting of the West Tallaght Community Forum, Councillor O'Connor praised the efforts of the Tallaght Gardai, under Superintendent Tomas Gormley and the Council for dedicating resources to the issue which arose from serious anti-social behavior and crime which endangered Dublin Bus staff and those using the service.

Councillor Charlie O'Connor welcomed the stated commitment that Dublin Bus and its representative Trade Unions (NBRU and SIPTU) "will continue to work actively with all stakeholders towards providing a safe and reliable transport service for customers, employees and the community we service".

He added that the local community must continue to support those working to ensure the continuation of the Dublin Bus service to the community which is clearly most important to many.



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NEW HOUSING MEASURES WILL GET MORE HOMES BUILT MORE QUICKLY

Extra measures agreed by Cabinet recently under the Housing for All plan will speed up home building and drive down building costs, a local TD has said.

Deputy Emer Higgins, TD for Dublin Mid-West said that these additional provisions are good news for home buyers, renters and builders. "There are three strands to these new measures, which will make home ownership

more affordable for many again," said Deputy Higgins.

The measures comprise Reducing the cost of construction by scrapping the development levies required to connect new homes with roads, water and other services, and subsidising development levies, saving up to the value of €12,650 per home on average. This will cut the cost of building a home and apply

for a limited time only to act as an incentive. Increasing the pace at which vacant and derelict properties are renovated for new housing by increasing grants to cut the cost of restoring empty homes and making it easier to apply.

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant will be increased from €30,000 to €50,000 for vacant properties and from €50,000 to €70,000

for derelict properties, extended to cover houses built up to 2007, and will be available for properties intended for rental as well as owner-occupied.

Government financing of the construction of affordable apartments under Cost Rental to get work started on thousands of affordable apartments to rent which have planning permission but which are not being progressed - again, a substantial subsidy for a limited time only to speed up construction.

The Government has agreed to commit up to €750 million via the Land Development Agency and other providers as part of this initiative to complete 4,000 to 6,000 additional affordable apartments under the Cost Rental system.

"Thousands of private and public homes are being built but we need to do more," Deputy Higgins said. "These additional measures will

make it cheaper to build and refurbish a home. It will speed up new home building and drive down costs across the board. "Housing for All is working. 30,000 new homes were built last year - ahead of target - and up from just 4,500 ten years ago. We can all see evidence of new construction around us in Dublin," added Deputy Higgins.

"Around 400 people per week are now buying their first home. Fine Gael set up a special Help to Buy Scheme to help first time buyers with a deposit, and our First Home Scheme helps buyers to bridge the gap and close the deal on a home. "I expect the additional actions announced will have an immediate impact and

will increase the number of homes built in Dublin over the coming years. It should address the difficulties around un-activated planning permissions and might open up options to people who previously may have discounted the idea of taking on a vacant or derelict property, making the best use of our existing housing stock.

"Building a mix of public and private housing and restoring a strong rental sector is the top priority now, giving everyone the opportunity to live their lives in the security of their own home. These extra measures will give local people more options, more opportunity and more hope for the future," Deputy Higgins concluded.

APPEAL FOR CLONDALKIN FOODBANK

Cllr Francis Timmons recently highlighted the appeal for the local Clondalkin Foodbank, he said "Clondalkin Helping Homeless and those in need has always had huge support from our community - our main current need is food for the weekly Foodbank - we are asking you to look through your kitchen presses maybe there is food reaching its use by date?"

Maybe food you won't eat? Maybe you might be able add a few items to your weekly shop? Maybe you could donate them to Clondalkin Helping Homeless & those in need?" Cllr Timmons continued

"We accept all unopened, non-perishable foods and in-date food can be dropped into the Bawnogue Community centre or Knockmitten Community centre!

We have 3 services in Clondalkin helping homeless and those in need require 1. weekly foodbank, 2. foodcloud delivered to those in need and 3. providing tents, sleeping bags and supplies to homeless people as needed."

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€15,000 FOR ST FINIAN'S GAA COMMUNITY WALKING TRACK



Some €15,000 funding will be allocated to St Finian's GAA club Newcastle to upgrade their community walking track, a local TD has said. Deputy Higgins said: "The funding, which has been allocated to St Finian's GAA club Newcastle will enable upgrades such as lighting and improved surfaces. "These upgrades will help St. Finian's to empower people to stay active all year round by creating a safe and inclusive space for people of all ages and mobilities. "St. Finian's play an invaluable role in fostering social connections in Newcastle and the surrounding community and by expanding access to their facilities they are helping to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone who uses them.

"I'd like to commend St. Finian's and all clubs across Lucan, Clondalkin, Palmerstown, Rathcoole, Brittas and Saggart for their wonderful contribution to their communities and I want to thank the GAA for the significant work involved in the process," added Deputy

Higgins. Local Cllr. Shirley O'Hara said, "I am delighted to see St. Finian's being recognised in this and I'm sure the funding will be put to good use to improve the walking tracks in the local area especially as we move into these warmer months where people can be out and about more."

The Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Hildegard Naughton said the once off national funding of €815,000 provided by Healthy Ireland is designed to make community walking tracks located on GAA grounds more accessible to more people. Minister Naughton said: "I am delighted to welcome the announcement of the successful clubs for this very worthwhile initiative. Healthy Ireland has been a long-standing partner of the Irish Life GAA Healthy Club Project and supporter of the GAA's efforts to transform clubs into hubs for health in their communities, all of which makes a significant contribution to the Healthy Ireland agenda."

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COELIAC SOCIETY OF IRELAND LAUNCH AWARENESS WEEK 2023

The Coeliac Society of Ireland has launched Awareness Week 2023 and is encouraging families to take a proactive approach to their health by getting tested for coeliac disease and gluten intolerance. Awareness Week will run from 15th May to 20th May 2023 with a mix of online and in person gatherings throughout the country. This year's awareness theme is all about Family & Diagnosis and the society is asking all households to "Make a Promise this Awareness Week - Get Tested!". This is not just a catch phrase but is a critically important question that needs to be answered and is based on the findings of a study on "Family Prevalence" of the incurable autoimmune coeliac disease.

According to the research, only 28.8% of first-degree relatives of sufferers have been tested for coeliac disease, and 9.3% of those tested were diagnosed with the condition. Children were the most likely group of first-degree relatives to be tested and/or diagnosed compared to other relatives, such as siblings and parents.

Coeliac disease is a genetic autoimmune disorder that affects approximately 1.5% of the population (76,500). Symptoms can range from mild to severe and may include abdominal pain, bloating, and fatigue. If left untreated, coeliac disease can lead to serious complications such as malnutrition, osteoporosis, and an increased risk of certain types of cancer. The Coeliac Society of Ireland is urging all first-degree family members to get tested for coeliac disease. Currently it is estimated that 62,250 children and adults are undiagnosed coeliacs.

Sarah Keogh, Head Dietician, Coeliac Society of Ireland said. "Getting tested for coeliac disease is an important step in taking charge of your health. It's a simple blood test that can be done by your local GP. If you have a family member with coeliac disease, it's important to get tested, as you may have a higher risk of developing the condition."

Coeliac Awareness Week 2023 runs from 15th- 20th May. People can register

free of charge at www.coeliac.ie to attend advice talks, information meetings, dietetic clinics, cooking and catering demonstrations, and to find out more about coeliac disease and gluten intolerance. Kindly supported by by Promise Gluten Free, Coeliac Awareness Week is a must attend event for all people concerned about their gut health and living gluten free.

Mary Horkan, Senior Marketing Manager of Promise Gluten Free bakery, expressed the company's pride in being the sponsor of Coeliac Awareness Week and their contribution to promoting awareness around diagnosis and the transition to a gluten-free diet. Mary said: "Being the number one supplier of gluten-free breads and cakes in Ireland, Promise Gluten Free bakery is committed to making gluten-free living more accessible and easier for those who have to live with it. There has been the great progress made in gluten-free options, making the choices for gluten-free living better and greater than ever before."

CLONDALKIN STUDENTS RAISE FUNDS FOR DIL CORKAGH PARK



Under the guidance of local Zumba instructor, Lorraine Smith, and Operation Transformation's Stephanie Bowden, students and teachers in Colaiste Bríd took part in a special TikTok challenge to raise funds for Darkness into Light Corkagh Park. The event will take place in the early hours of May 6th in aid of Pieta. Tickets available from darknessintolight.ie

PIETA'S COFFEE MORNING HELD IN BALLYFERMOT



Members of the Pieta Ballyfermot Centre team pictured at Pieta's Ballyfermot Centre coffee morning, to highlight the centre's presence in the local community. Pieta has been providing free, professional therapeutic mental health services in the area since 2011. Pic Credit: INPHO/Tom Maher

THE CAP AWARDS FOR INDEPENDENT IRISH AUTHORS ARE NOW OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS

The CAP Awards provide a platform to showcase Independently Published Authors in Ireland, bringing them to the attention of book shops, distributors, and the media with all money raised going to the charity Aware. Aware is a non-profit organisation that provides education, support, and information on mental health, particularly depression, bipolar disorder, and positive mental health. Founded in 2016 by author Carolann Copland, The CAP Awards have helped to promote and encourage Irish Authors, with the awards providing recognition for the best that Ireland has to offer from Independent Authors. After Publishing her own books, Carolann felt there was an opportunity to recognise other Authors that had also self-published in Ireland.

"After leaving my job as a primary school teacher, I wanted to find a new project that would showcase Irish

Authors and help a charity close to my heart which is Aware. I felt that recognition for Independent Authors would be a good mix of something I was passionate about while also raising money for a good cause."

Carolann has also succeeded in getting other Irish Authors involved in organising the event and prides herself on the quality of the judges she will have on the panel this year. "We are very fortunate to have other Irish Authors get involved with the event and are very proud this year to have Zoe Miller, Patricia O'Reilly, Orna Ross, Emma-Jane Leeson and ER Murray as our judging panel." The CAP Awards have also received direct support from Stephen Butterfly, Head of Fundraising at Aware who will benefit directly from the proceeds raised from the Awards. "We are honoured



to have been chosen as the partner charity for The CAP Award). This is a fantastic initiative to recognise and celebrate the achievements of Ireland's many self-published authors. We are very grateful to Carolann for her ongoing support of Aware, for bringing attention to the topic of mental health and raising much needed funds for the organisation."

To find out more and to submit your application for the Awards visit www.capawards.ie

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BREAKING BARRIERS AND BUILDING FUTURES FOR WOMEN IN IRELAND

Rethink Ireland, in partnership with Bank of America and the Department of Rural and Community Development via the Dormant Accounts Fund are pleased to announce the launch of the new Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Empowerment Fund 2023-2026. This \$1 million Fund is committed to empowering women experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and migrant women, through targeted support for four to five non-profit organisations.

Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, Minister of State at the Department of Finance, said "The Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Fund is a powerful investment in the potential of women, particularly those most in need of assistance. It is heartening to see collaboration between private and public sectors towards a common goal of gender equality and social empowerment. I am pleased to see Rethink Ireland continue its partnership with

Bank of America and the Irish Government, a move which will help empower more and more women to achieve their full potential through employment and education opportunities under the Fund."

The Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Empowerment Fund builds on the resounding success of the previous €2.2 million Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Fund, which empowered women across Ireland to enhance their economic mobility and secure employment. The previous Fund supported five Awardees, enabling 1,088 women to secure sustainable jobs, while a further 747 women were supported to enrol in accredited education programmes. The new Fund aims to support more than 850 women into employment and/or education programmes, with at least 260 of those women supported into quality, sustainable jobs.

Fernando Vicario, CEO of

Bank of America Europe DAC, and Country Executive for Ireland said "At Bank of America, we are committed to Responsible Growth. We focus on enhancing economic mobility for the people and communities in which we work. We've been partnering with Rethink Ireland since 2019, and through that time have supported over 1,000 women into sustained employment. Building on our partnership, I am honoured to announce the continuation of our work together, with the launch of the Women of Ireland Empowerment Fund. This new initiative aims to support over 850 women into jobs and, or education programmes. We greatly look forward to seeing this new programme come to life."

Throughout its lifespan, the Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Fund highlighted the disproportionate burden of domestic, childcare, and other care work borne by women in Ireland. Women with children in Ireland

report spending an average of 42.6 hours per week on care work, while men report spending only 25.2 hours - 60% less than women. This disparity results in women opting out of education and careers to provide care in the home, highlighting the urgent need for programmes that address this imbalance.

Deirdre Mortell, CEO of Rethink Ireland said "We are thrilled to launch the Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Empowerment Fund and continue our commitment to empowering marginalised women across Ireland. Through our partnership

with Bank of America and the Department of Rural and Community Development, we will support organisations that are dedicated to addressing the barriers faced by migrant women and other women marginalised from the workforce. By providing access to education and sustainable employment opportunities, we can create a more equal, inclusive and sustainable society for all."

To celebrate the successful conclusion of the Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Fund 2020-2023, Rethink Ireland and Bank of America held an evening

event on Wednesday April 19, 2023, at the National Gallery of Ireland. The event highlighted the accomplishments of the Fund Awardees and the impact they made in their communities with the support of the Fund. Applications for the Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Empowerment Fund 2023-2026 are now open.

Interested not-for-profit organisations are invited to apply through Rethink Ireland's website: www.rethinkireland.ie with the application period closing on Friday, 2nd June 2023.



Pictured Stephanie Walsh, Rethink Ireland, Mavis Ramaznai, Irish Refugee Council and Heydi Foster, An Cosán at Bank of America's Dublin HQ ahead of the launch of Rethink Ireland's new 'Mná Na hÉireann, Women Of Ireland Empowerment Fund', supported by Bank of America and the Department of Rural and Community Development. Photo Marc O'Sullivan

OLD BAWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL LAUNCHES MONSTER CAR RAFFLE



Pictured at Old Bawn Community School for the Launch of its Monster Car Raffle to fund an AstroTurf Pitch were School Principal Ursula McCabe with Councillor Charlie O'Connor and Fair City actor Adam Karim.

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STEWARTS CARE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMME OPENS APPLICATIONS

Councillor Vicky Casserly has opened applications for the Stewarts Care Supported Independent Living Programme at an event in Rossecourt Training Centre, Balgaddy, Lucan. Stewarts Care is a voluntary organisation providing comprehensive community-based services to people with intellectual disabilities. The Supported Independent Living Programme is a training programme designed to enhance a person's ability to live in their own home, in their local community as independently as possible.

The programme forms part of Stewarts Care's Strategy (2022-2026) which focuses on enriching the lives of the people served by Stewarts Care through providing the right service, for the right person, at the right time. The programme takes a person-centred approach to supporting participants to live more independently. Participants are supported and enabled to make their own choices and decisions and to create meaningful roles for themselves in the community that they live in.

Speaking at the event, Councillor Vicky Casserly commented, "I am delighted to open applications for this hugely worthwhile

programme delivered by Stewarts Care. The right to live independently and be included in the community is enshrined in article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is a key element of the HSE's reform programme, Transforming Lives.

Stewarts Care has supported a number of people to live as they choose, in the communities they choose and to have meaningful roles in these communities. These communities benefit from this integration and immersion by having a diverse and active population. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for the programme and all of the people who are signing up today. Through partnership and collaboration, I have no doubt you will contribute massively to the communities you live in, and I wish you the best of luck on your journey".

Building on the Transforming Lives Programme and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, Stewarts Care has partnered with various organisations to not only prepare and support individuals to live independently but to secure appropriate housing for them to live in. Since the



Pictured Aidan Farrell, Cllr. Vicki Casserly, Brendan O'Connor & Laura Sweeney.

programme first launched in 2012, Stewarts Care has supported 17 participants to live in communities across Tallaght, Clondalkin, Neilstown, Adamstown and Lucan.

Stewarts Care is now firmly focused on expanding the number of people supported to live independently in their community and influencing policy at a national and local level. Stewarts Care is proud to represent the voice of the people it serves through the

organisation's membership of South Dublin County Council's Housing Steering Group. Through this forum, Stewarts Care aspires to build capacity at a local level and to enable people to have a voice in the conversations that impact them.

Laura Sweeney, Supported Independent Living Manager at Stewarts Care, said: "We know that we can only achieve the ambitious goals of this programme through a partnership approach. A key

component of the Supported Independent Living Programme is providing suitable, high-quality housing to the participants. We are very grateful for the continued support of all our partners in providing suitable accommodation including the HSE, South Dublin County Council, Clúid Housing and Tuath Housing."

Stewarts Care has developed two training apartments to support participants to achieve the goals of the programme. Both apartments contain all the elements of a true-to-life apartment but with additional training

facilities to enhance learning in a real-life setting. Internal and external trainers, and support workers, work as a team to deliver training along with support from Stewarts Care's multi-disciplinary inhouse teams including day services, social work, occupational therapy, psychology, psychiatry and adapted physical activity. The programme is open to people over the age of 18 who are already accessing the services provided by Stewarts Care. For more information on how to apply, applicants can visit the Stewarts Care website www.stewartscare.ie



Will you join Team Barretstown at the VHI Women's Mini Marathon?



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NCT CRITERIA CHANGES REQUIRED TO REDUCE BACKLOG

Mark Ward TD has called on the Minister for Transport to carry out a review into the NCT system as the long delays that people are experiencing are causing havoc across the country. The Deputy's calls come as figures for Fonthill in Dublin show a 5 week wait for those applying for their NCT.

Teachta Ward said "The system is under real stress and consideration needs to be given to extending the time between tests by allowing the test time to run from when the car is tested rather than from when it falls due. At present many cars are only a few months in test when the next test becomes due because of the long delays. "The NCT system was introduced to conform with an EU directive that

sought to set standards of road worthiness and control emissions right across all EU member states.

"When a new car reaches four years old it has its first test and then every two years until its tenth birthday, after which it is an annual test. Pandemic restrictions meant that all these tests were postponed which caused a long backlog. "We also have the additional issue where there has been a notable increase in the number of older cars being kept on the road as second-hand cars are scarce and more expensive.

"As the system struggles to catch up, there are now delays of 5 weeks to get an NCT here in Fonthill. "Sinn Féin's communications and transport spokesperson

Martin Kenny TD has suggested that the Minister should consider changing the testing time criteria from the same month every year, to a year from when the test is completed. Consideration must also be given to temporarily allowing an extra year before new cars would be required to have the first NCT.

"That would certainly go some way to reducing the huge wait time faced by people in Dublin. "The additional staffing at NCT centres and longer operating hours are welcome and will help, but the backlog is being compounded by more older cars falling due faster. "An intervention in the system will be required to get it under control, and Sinn Féin have solutions."

ROWLAGH CREDIT UNION DONATES TO LOCAL GROUPS



Recently Rowlagh Credit Union based in Clondalkin have made donations to two local groups Liscarne Senior Citizens Indoor Bowls Group and Clondalkin Relay For Life.

TALLAGHT BROTHERS ENJOY NATIONAL FITNESS GAMES



Young Tallaght brothers Tommy (6) and Arthur (2) Traynor pictured with their Dad enjoying Ireland's National Fitness Games held at Dublin's National Sports Campus. Supported by Irish banana importer Fyffes, the weekend 'festival of fitness' is viewed by them as the ideal prelude to National Banana Day, which took place on April 19th. Now in its seventh year, the initiative was devised to combat obesity by encouraging healthy eating and an active lifestyle, especially amongst young and growing children.

IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS MUST BE FOCUS OF DEMAND MANAGEMENT PLANS

Improved public transport infrastructure must be in place before a potential tax on motorists is even considered, according to a local TD. Deputy Emer Higgins said the relevant stakeholders must work together to improve the quality and efficiency of our transport networks ahead of any new legislation or potential new taxes aimed at reducing car use to meet our climate emissions targets. Deputy Higgins said: "Any plan for the country's future transport needs must continue to prioritise improving public transport infrastructure, instead of placing further pressure on motorists in terms of additional cost.

"We know additional measures are required to further incentivise a move away from diesel and petrol fuelled journeys. "But viable alternatives are required that people will use to really encourage them to leave the car at home and to be able

to rely on a public service transport system both in rural and urban areas. "Indeed, it is welcome to see the Minister for Transport arguing within his own Department that the first response should not be the use of congestion charge and that we must increase the provision of public transport.

"Projects for the greater Dublin area including The DART+ programme and the MetroLink, which involve major investment through the National Development Plan, are vital to improving the quality and efficiency of our transport networks. "BusConnects and Luas extensions will also give people viable transport alternatives and lead to increased sustainability

within our communities in the future.

"There must be a renewed commitment to ensuring these projects are expedited with additional funding in line with rising construction costs and inflation to ensure there are no setbacks or undue delays. "Not all citizens currently have good access to public transport, and we need investment on those public transport routes that run infrequently, particularly in suburban areas and also in rural towns and villages. "We need a transport plan that works for commuters, businesses and retailers, and visitors to our city centre, as well as meeting our obligations under the Climate Action Plan."

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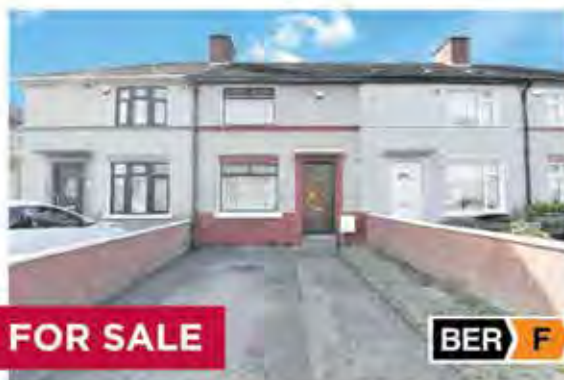
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MOTORING LIFE WITH



New DS 4 offers Captivating Elegance



By Breda Corrigan



DS Automobiles Ireland has proudly introduced a stunning new hatchback to their model line-up. The new DS 4 captivates the senses with its dramatic proportions, charismatic appearance and muscular stance. Inside, augmented technology is at one with the cockpit for an exquisitely pure design that is both high-tech and user-friendly to deliver a serene driving experience.

Eye-Catching Good Looks.

Large wheels, an aesthetic silhouette and an aerodynamic profile blend perfectly with the lines of the DS 4 to provide the five-door, five-seat hatchback with eye-catching good looks. At the rear, its sculpted lights perfectly match its elegant shapes, for a striking, spectacular identity. Inspired by both the characteristics of an SUV Coupé and those of a compact saloon, the DS 4 provides drivers with the best of both worlds, with many customisation options available for ultimate personalisation. The cabin of the DS 4 delivers a refined and serene experience thanks to the integration of a 10-inch HD touchscreen into the dashboard, its E-TOGGLE

gear control, its stylish electric window controls and its integrated DS AIR vents. To enhance the interior of the DS 4, designers have chosen original materials such as forged carbon, brown ash and full-grain or Nappa leather in the DS signature watchstrap design. The DS 4's interior really is exquisite, and is remarkably well engineered. From the hand-stitched leather steering wheel to the plush dashboard, it feels every bit as upmarket as premium competitors from Mercedes-Benz and BMW. While touchscreen displays can be distracting to navigate through when on the move, the DS 4 offers drivers an ingenious solution by way of a second smaller touchscreen positioned low down on the centre console. This is easier to reach and can be used for operating the main navigation system. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are standard across the range, and all DS 4 models come with two USB-C ports in the front, while most also come with two in the back.

Trim & Engine Options.

The DS 4 range is enriched with two versions: DS 4, which exalts comfort and refinement (Bastille

+, Trocadero and Rivoli trim variants) and DS 4 Performance Line, for those with a sporting spirit (Performance Line, and Performance Line + trim variants). Powering the new DS 4 are fuel-efficient petrol (PureTech) and diesel (Blue HDI) engines, along with an impressive petrol/electric plug-in hybrid (E-TENSE PHEV) powertrain that offers low emissions, low fuel consumption, high performance and terrific refinement. The technologically-advanced plug-in hybrid system in the DS 4 produces 225bhp, and is available in all but entry-level Bastille + trim. All engine and trim variants come with a slick-shifting eight-speed (EAT-8) automatic transmission as standard for ease of drivability. The DS 4 uses the same third-generation EMP2 platform that is used across other brands in its Stellantis Group parent company portfolio, but 70% of it has been modified to meet various specific DS 4 requirements

Test Car.

My test car was a DS 4 Performance Line + (Plus) 1.6 PureTech (Petrol), which was finished in stunning

Pearl Velvet Red metallic paintwork with a Perla Nera Black Bi-Tone Roof. The sporty black theme is enhanced even further by way of 19-inch 'Minneapolis' alloy wheels and two-tone door mirror casings. Producing 180bhp and 250Nm of torque, the car can sprint from 0-100km/h in a sprightly 8.0-seconds, on its way to a top speed of 230km/h (where permitted), with fuel consumption as low as 6.4l/100km (44.1 MPG) possible on a WLTP combined driving cycle. The light and precise steering in the DS 4 ensures that the car is easy to manoeuvre around town, and the cars' slick-shifting automatic transmission makes driving on city streets a doddle. The cars' soft suspension set-up makes it one of the most comfortable cars in its class, enabling it to tackle road imperfections and potholes in a composed manner.

Cruising at motorway speeds in the DS 4 brings a real sense of calm with it, and the refined feeling inside the car is enhanced by the supremely comfortable seats and acoustic insulated glazing throughout the car. The four-cylinder petrol engine is punchy and refined in equal manner, while a good

level of grip in corners allows for spirited performance on twisty back roads. With an overall length of 4.4 metres, and width of 1.87 metres, the DS4 belies the impressive interior spaciousness that awaits occupants. A 2.675 metre wheelbase provides generous leg and head room for up to five adults, while the 430-litre boot volume on offer in the in the DS 4 can be easily expanded to 1.240-litres when the rear seats are folded down. Standard specification in my test car included Basalt Black leather interior trim, gloss black front grille and DS WINGS, dark tinted rear windows, black upper window surround, Fleur Leather multi-function steering wheel, front & rear parking sensors, reversing camera with 180-degree vision, pop-out flush-fitting door handles, keyless start, DS MATRIX LED VISION headlights, DS 3D LED rear lights, LED daytime running lights, Mirror Screen with Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™, 10-inch touchscreen, 7-inch digital instrument cluster, front & rear central

armrests, DS DRIVE ASSIST (semi-autonomous driving, Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop & Go, and Lane Positioning Assist), Rear Cross Traffic Alert, remote central locking with deadlocking, perimeter & volumetric alarm system, electric tailgate, acoustic windscreen, laminated acoustic insulated front & rear glazing, and a 7-speaker sound system, along with many more comfort, convenience, and safety features. The DS 4 is available in a choice of six striking colours, with the option of a Perla Nera Black roof for added visual drama.

Verdict & Pricing.

With its blend of stylish and distinctive looks, a high-quality and logically laid-out cabin, and generous levels of standard equipment, the new DS 4 is a credible premium family hatchback in every respect. The DS 4 is priced from €39,390 (including dealer delivery-related charges), with my test car specification priced at €54,540.



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CONCERN AT INCREASE IN HOMELESS NUMBERS DURING EVICTION BAN

There has been serious concerns raised by local representatives as figures from South Dublin County Council reveal that homeless numbers increased during the eviction ban.

People Before Profit Councillor Madeleine Johansson is herself facing eviction and said that she was "deeply worried" about the fact that there were 160 new presentations to

homeless services in the first quarter of 2023. The figures were released as part of the Capital Programme Progress Report at the April meeting of South Dublin County Council. 80 new households were added to the homeless register as a result. There are now a total of 511 households registered as homeless in South Dublin County.

Cllr Madeleine Johansson

said: "I'm deeply worried about the fact that homelessness increased during the period of the eviction ban in the first quarter of 2023. We know that thousands of people have received notices to quit that will fall due in the next few months.

If homelessness increased even when there was a ban in place those figures are likely to go up sharply

in the coming months as thousands of people will be looking for accommodation. "We already have over 500 households registered as homeless in South Dublin and there are very few properties available to rent in the private market.

There needs to be a ramping

up of the tenant-in-situ scheme where the council buys the property where tenants are facing eviction. But this will not be enough to stem the tide of evictions.

"I have an eviction notice for June and it's a very frightening time for tenants because there is simply

nowhere for people to go.

People Before Profit are calling on the government to reinstate the ban on no fault evictions and to immediately take actions to protect tenants. Only the reinstating of the ban can save hundreds of tenants from homelessness."

ANGER AT NEWCASTLE BUS SERVICE

Cllr Francis Timmons recently commented on the issues with the bus service in Newcastle "I am calling on Dublin Bus and The NTA to immediately address the issues around the 68 bus, these are constant issues around lateness, unreliability, cancellation and non arrival". The local Councillor said "I find it hard to believe that if we cannot deliver a poor bus service like the 68 that there will be multiple issues in providing additional services". Cllr Timmons continued "the 68 bus also serves Peamount Hospital and 30 years ago when I worked there it was the same hourly plus service, this is with the addition of thousands of new homes and families, many report to me they have to

drive due to the unreliable nature of the bus'.

Cllr Timmons received the following reply from the NTA Oireachtas Liaison and it stated "Route W6 (Maynooth - Tallaght) - due to infrastructure constraints on the approach to Hazelhatch Bridge, the routes will initially be split into W61 and W62 until the infrastructure issues are resolved. This will commence as routes W61 (Maynooth-Hazelhatch Station) and W62 (Newcastle-Tallaght). It is currently anticipated that the W61 and W62 routes will be launched in late May or early June 2023 subject to operational readiness".



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