

ISSUE 23  
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## EDITORIAL

**H**appy New Year to all of our readers. We hope you enjoyed the Christmas break and that returning to the grind hasn't been too difficult.

Well election fever has hit the country like an epidemic, and with D-day fast approaching we know our readers have been, and continue to be bombarded from all sides with politics and propaganda. For these reasons, we have gone relatively light on politics this time around.

That said, we do have an interesting first edition of 2020 for our readers with community events, awards, initiatives and funding boosts to name a few.

While we have endeavoured not to go too heavy on the election, our feature does tie in with it as we look into the history of the Mecca to which the candidates face with aspirations of making the

pilgrimage and taking up residence; Leinster house.

We also take a good look at what Draiocht has to offer us in the coming months, from plays to pantos and installations from local artists, there is plenty to do at our local arts centre this Spring.

After years of speculation as to its fate, the site of Brady's Pub in Castleknock will be transformed into a large-scale co-living development much to the chagrin of local representatives. Bartra, the property and infrastructural development company bought the 0.783 acre property for around €3.3m, and has planning permission for 36 two- and three-bedroom apartments and penthouses. Local representatives are up in arms about An Bord Pleanála's decision, with one going so far as to call it "an outrage."

On the sport side of things; Ireland U21 manager Stephen Kenny has lent his support at the launch for Grassroots Fingal's Futsal programme. The highly anticipated six-week programme will cater to over 1,000 players.



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## TU BLANCH CAMPUS GETS FUNDING BOOST

The Blanchardstown campus of Technological University (formerly ITB) has been allocated a funding boost of €590,000. The money is part of a €10 million funding package being provided to ITs across the country and TU Dublin. The investment is being made under Project Ireland 2040 for the current academic year and the money will be used on small-scale and necessary building improvements.

**A**n Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar welcomed the announcement saying the Government is pumping lots of money into colleges, ITs and universities because it knows how important a strong third level sector is for the economy and young people.

“This funding will allow TU Dublin Blanchardstown to carry out small scale improvements, such as IT upgrades or repurposing space to cater for the needs of students and staff. The Blanchardstown campus, which is part of TU Dublin, provides a great range of courses to students, from apprenticeships to post graduate masters. Dublin West is the fastest growing population centre in the country, so it’s really important that we continue to invest in housing, healthcare and education to cater for our growing community. This will only be possible if we continue to keep the economy strong and maintain the job creation we’ve seen in recent years,” he said.

This funding will also assist the university in hosting the wide range of events which take place there throughout the year including the recent Afri Hedge School.

TU Dublin students, in partnership with Action from Ireland (Afri), recently hosted the 2019 Afri Hedge School. The event took place at the Blanchardstown campus, and was organised by third year students of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Community and Youth Development course as part of their module Principles of Human Rights.

Learning about and resisting the causes of poverty is at the heart of Afri’s work, and the theme for 2019 Hedge School is

“Food Fashion Fuel” focusing on climate justice, social justice and sustainability.

Mindful of the Sustainable Development Goals to 2030 and their importance in focusing action for a more equal, just and sustainable world, the event featured a blend of speakers, workshops, discussions, drama and creative activities.

Speakers included - Saoirse McHugh, who describes herself as an environmentalist, a democratic socialist, and a grower. Eddie Mitchell of Love Leitrim and North Leitrim Sustainable Energy Community and renowned actor and activist Donal O’Kelly, who together with Brian Fleming and Ellen Cranitch performed an intriguing piece called “Roxy’s Head is Melted”.

Another such event was the 21st Irish Machine Vision and Image Processing Conference which TU hosted at Grangegorman in August.

Conference attendees learned about the latest innovations and ongoing research in the Irish machine vision community, and enjoyed many excellent opportunities to network with the key researchers in the country in this pivotally important sector. In addition, there were ample opportunities for increased visibility within the academic community, with researchers, graduate students, and computer vision companies.

One of the keynote speakers at the IMVIP conference was David Moloney, Director of Machine Vision at Intel and a key mover at the intersection of image processing and Edge Computing. Among many other notable roles and achievements, David was the founder and CTO of Movidius, an Alumni of TU Dublin Hothouse.



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# PLANNING POLICY SLAMMED AS BRADY'S DEVELOPMENT GETS GREEN LIGHT

The decision of An Bord Pleanála on 8 January 2020 to allow a large-scale co-living development on the site of Brady's Pub, Old Navan Road, Castleknock, has been criticised by local representatives.

**B**artra, the property and infrastructural development company established by Richard Barrett, is considering its options for the development of the Bradys Castleknock Inn site.

The developer bought the 0.783 acre property for around €3.3m, or about €450,000 over the €2.85m quoted by estate agents Finnegan Menton, who described it as a "ready to go" prospect as it has planning permission for 36 two- and three-bedroom apartments and penthouses.

From Bartra's perspective, one of the attractions of the site is believed to be its proximity to the James Connolly Memorial Hospital Blanchardstown, as this is one of the reasons why it would qualify for a co-living development.

The Bradys site is one of four which Bartra has considered for co-living. Bartra's portfolio also includes

commercial and leisure properties, as well as other types of residential assets.

Deputy Joan Burton (Lab) said this decision is the sad outcome of the new planning guidelines by Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy.

"These new rules are steadily dismantling high quality, community orientated planning in favour of substandard housing motivated purely by profit. The developer is now being allowed to make a financial killing and this will lead to more inappropriate development in suburban areas: Fine Gael seems to be in thrall to developers. Meanwhile the government is on a go slow in providing decent affordable housing for families and single people," she said.

Her party colleague, Cllr John Walsh who also objected to the development, said: 'It beggars belief that Bord Pleanála ignored the report of its own inspector in choosing

to give permission to this development. The Government has sidelined responsible planning and has created a developer's charter – shared living developments of this kind will never create sustainable communities and are entirely inappropriate to a suburban location.'

Walsh added: 'It is particularly disappointing that the current Minister facilitated this kind of substandard, for profit development and now Fine Gael are weeping crocodile tears when such developments are granted under their own government's planning legislation. They are repeating the same mistakes as Bertie Ahern at the height of the property bubble.'

The decision of An Bord Pleanála on 8 January 2020 to allow a large-scale co-living development on the site of Brady's Pub, Old Navan Road, Castleknock, has been criticised by local Labour party representatives.

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Meanwhile, Green Party Dublin West candidate, Cllr Roderic O'Gorman has slammed Fine Gael for pushing the "co-living" model of accommodation.

"I'm shocked and disappointed at the decision of An Bord Pleanala to grant planning permission for this co-living development on the Brady's Pub site, even though their own inspector recommended rejection. Co-living is the wrong model for Ireland and this suburban site is absolutely the wrong place for co-living," he said.

"This decision is completely the fault of Fine Gael's housing policies. The Guidelines that Minister Eoghan Murphy introduced in 2018 to allow for co-living developments and high density building out of the city centre are the direct basis on which An Bord Pleanala made this decision. There has been no thought put into the co-living model: what protections will be in place for the tenants, who will look after these buildings if the rental companies sell them on?"

"No doubt the Taoiseach and local Fine Gael reps will be criticising this particular decision. They need to understand that the decision is the direct result of their Government, their Minister and their policies," said Cllr O'Gorman.

The Social Democrats have also lambasted the decision, with general election candidate Aengus O'Maolain calling it "an outrage".

"I hoped we had moved past the days of bedsits and tenements, but the green light for this development in Dublin 15 is a sign that the race to the bottom for standards of accommodation has entered a new and frightening stage. Accommodation that is just one small step above a hostel is not suitable for long-term residence. Tenants deserve much better. To get a grasp of how crowded this will be, planning permission was previously granted at this site for 41 apartments. This development will contain 198



units on the same site," he said.

Noting his concern that the tenancies in this development and others like it may fall outside the traditional landlord-tenant relationship as defined by law, Ó Maoláin added,

"The gap in law that might allow the landlord to 'licence' permission to live in this type of development needs to be closed immediately and full landlord-tenant protections must be put in place for anyone forced to live in such a place."



## There is a Solution Group Alcoholics Anonymous

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Our group meets every Saturday morning at 11am at the above address, the meeting is open and everyone is welcome to attend and discover what we do. Our members have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind **and** body, to show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of our group, for them we hope it will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary. The **only** requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking, there are no fees to be paid. Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. There are no age or education requirements. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem.

Alcoholism is an obsession of the mind that condemns one to drink and an allergy of the body that condemns one to die. (Dr. Wm. D. Silkworth), this is underpinned by a Spiritual malady that changes our actions and personality for the worse. The spiritual programme of A.A. if lived as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.

Emer  
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**1**

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**VOTE 2** Leo VARADKAR

# HARTSTOWN MAN ACCUSED OF HANDLING STOLEN PROPERTY

**A man has been sent for trial accused of tricking people into posting him high-value electronic goods without payment.**

**B**rahim Azeez (27) is accused of multiple counts of possession of stolen property after allegedly going to a postal depot to collect the items - two laptops, a camera and a smartphone worth around €2,000.

A book of evidence was served on him at Blanchardstown District Court.

Mr Azeez, of Willows Court, Hartstown, is charged with four counts of possession of stolen property and one of

using a false instrument.

The offences are alleged to have happened at Fonthill Post Depot, Fonthill Road, Clondalkin, in 2017.

A state solicitor said the book of evidence was ready and was served on the accused.

## Alibi

Judge David McHugh gave Mr Azeez the formal notice of his deadline for providing the prosecution with details of any alibi he intends to rely on.

He also ordered the prosecution to furnish the defence with copies of the accused's garda interview video.

Judge McHugh sent Mr Azeez forward to the next sittings of Dublin Circuit Criminal Court.

It was alleged that the accused tricked people into posting high-value electronic items to his address, believing they had already received payment, but no payment was made.

A garda sergeant told the court that Mr Azeez is accused of collecting a Samsung Galaxy S6 smartphone from the depot on September 2, 2017; a Nikon camera and lens on October 4; an Acer Aspire laptop on October 2 and an Apple Macbook on October 26.

He allegedly also went to the depot on October 19 and produced a counterfeit driving licence as identification to collect a package.

# €9.3M BLANCH CENTRE REVAMP

**HILLSBOROUGH construction giant Graham has begun work on a €9.3 million scheme to overhaul Ireland's largest shopping complex between now and the run-up to next Christmas.**

**I**t has been appointed by Multi-Ireland, which manages the Blanchardstown retail and leisure complex near Dublin for its owners Blackstone, which has an annual footfall of more than 16 million people, many from the north.

The revamp will see the centre welcome eight new stores and unveil a modern reimagined space, and more than 65 Graham employees and subcontractors will be working on the project until November.

The scheme aims to enhance the internal appearance and functioning of the existing mall areas which cover some 1,100,000 sq ft of retail space with a further 200,000 sq ft of leisure space occupied by cinemas, a theatre and arts centre as well as Ireland's largest public library.

Graham contracts director Neill Gillespie said: "Given our recent experience in retail refurbishments of this scale, we're confident we will overcome the challenges this type of project brings and successfully hand over a modernised shopping and leisure environment that will benefit both the tenants and visitors to the centre."

The Blanchardstown contract follows the £750 million-turnover Graham's newest retail agreement with Primark to revamp four of its UK stores in a £25m deal.



Mr Gillespie added: "We will be bringing Blanchardstown into the new generation of retail and conclude with a space that provides a more streamlined, modern shopping experience.

"This will include new floors at level one and two, replacement of bulkheads and shopfronts and revised signage as well as the replacement of internal suspended ceilings at level one.

"There will also be alterations made to the central mall area with travellators replaced with escalators and two lifts, the removal of a water feature and the addition of a children's play area."

Blanchardstown already counts Dunnes Stores, M&S, Debenhams and Penny's among its anchor tenants, but after this latest upgrade will welcome the likes of JD Sports and Aldi to its shopping mix.

Graham operates from a network of 23 regional offices throughout the UK and Ireland and employs more than 2,200 staff, half of whom are based at its Northern Ireland operations in Hillsborough and Belfast.



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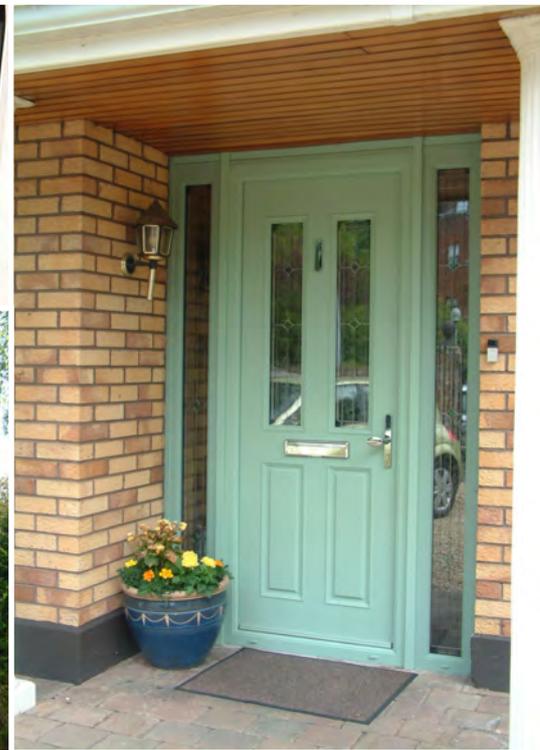
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# CALLS FOR REJECTION OF PROPOSED CARPENTERSTOWN DEVELOPMENT

The Area Committee for Castleknock, Mulhuddart and Ongar has unanimously approved a motion proposed by Cllr John Walsh (Lab), which called for the rejection of an application made by Glenveagh Homes for the construction of 192 apartments at Balroy House, Carpenterstown Road.



**C**llr Walsh has called on An Bord Pleanála to reject the application on the basis that it was contrary to proper planning and sustainable development of the area. This motion set out four key problems with the application:

- 1. The scale and height of the proposed five storey development is entirely inappropriate to the pattern of development in the surrounding area which consists mainly of two storey detached or semi-detached houses (with a smaller number of apartments) and amounts to over-development of this site.*
- 2. A development consisting of 5 five storey blocks will have an unacceptable negative visual impact on surrounding homes and estates and is severely detrimental to residential amenity.*
- 3. The development promotes an intensified level of development on this suburban site which is not supported by existing or planned infrastructure. The scale of the development will impose unsustainable pressure on*

*schools and childcare places in the area which are already heavily over-subscribed.*

- 4. The development is not served by adequate public transport links. The train service is not only at capacity but will not see any significant improvement in the short-term, while the Carpenterstown Road is not included on the high frequency B 'spine' routes under the Bus Connects plan.*

Cllr Walsh pointed out major flaws in the social infrastructure report, which the developer was required to submit to the Board to show that the new development would be adequately served by infrastructure:

“This application for 192 units is fundamentally flawed, as it fails to create a sustainable community and would place intolerable pressure on local infrastructure. Local schools are hugely over-subscribed and public transport services are already at capacity. The social infrastructure report provided by the developer overstates the number of primary and post-primary schools in the catchment area and ignores the huge pressure on student numbers in St Patrick’s National School, Diswellstown and Castleknock

Community College. The report, bizarrely, also tries to suggest that the area will get a new post-primary school in 2020 – this school is actually planned for the West Blanchardstown planning area and is well outside the catchment area of this development. In any case no site for this school has even been identified,” he said

His party colleague Deputy Joan Burton, who also objected to the application, said: “The proposed development is located in a ‘Highly Sensitive Landscape’ according to the Fingal County Development plan and has damaging implication for the local environment. The application involves the removal of at least 79 mature trees and two hedges from the site – of these only five trees were deemed unsuitable for long-term retention even in the applicant’s tree report. A detailed survey of the trees, fauna and wildlife on the Balroy site is necessary and the desk based screening study conducted by the applicant is entirely inadequate in this sensitive location.”

Deputy Burton also pointed out damaging implications for noise and air pollution from excessive removal of trees: ‘As Balroy House is so close to the M50, the retention of trees on the site is an important factor in limiting air pollution, which is already a major problem for communities adjoining the M50 in Carpenterstown and Laurel Lodge. Replacement of mature trees by saplings will not in any

way abate or reduce air pollution, while noise pollution will also increase with the loss of tree cover.’

This application is being considered by An Bord Pleanála under legislation regarding ‘strategic housing development’ put through by Minister for the Environment, Eoghan Murphy.

Cllr Walsh added: “Unfortunately the Council has no decision-making power over applications of over 100 units which are defined as strategic housing and go direct to An Bord Pleanála for decision due to Minister Murphy’s new planning rules. The Councillors received a briefing on the development from the planning department and our motion calling for rejection of the application is being included in Fingal Council’s submission to the Board – we wanted to send a clear signal that this kind of over-development is not acceptable or appropriate in an outer suburban area.”

Deputy Burton added: “It is particularly worrying that the minimal amount of social housing in the development - only 20 units - is concentrated in a single apartment block. This is unacceptable practice, is socially regressive and shows how little this development will do to address the housing crisis, it is all about creating a financial windfall for the developer.”

An Bord Pleanála does not comment on ongoing applications.

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## FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL LAUNCHES QUAD & SCRAMBLER BIKE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Fingal County Council recently conducted a public awareness campaign, highlighting the dangers quad bikes and scramblers pose to children. The campaign in the form of a cinema advert supports the recent initiative by the Road Safety Authority and An Garda Síochána. The advert outlines the correct environment, and care to be taken when riding these vehicles, and was shown in cinemas throughout Fingal.

**T**he campaign is strongly supported by An Garda Síochána and Motor Cycling Ireland. The advert was shown in Cinemas in Blanchardstown, Swords and Balbriggan for three weeks starting from December 27th with the aim of maximum impact at this peak cinema attendance period and was also promoted on Fingal County Council Social Media Channels.

Unless the bike has been registered, taxed, insured and brought up to the correct standard it is illegal for it to be used on the public road. It is illegal to use these bikes in public parks and open spaces. In the last number of years there has been a noticeable increase in the number of quads and scrambler bikes being used in an inappropriate manner in urban towns and cities. The use of these bikes on public roads, parks and open spaces has been a growing issue with communities feeling threatened and unsafe when these bikes are being used.

Mayor of Fingal, Eoghan O’Brien said: “This is a very important safety campaign which I strongly support.

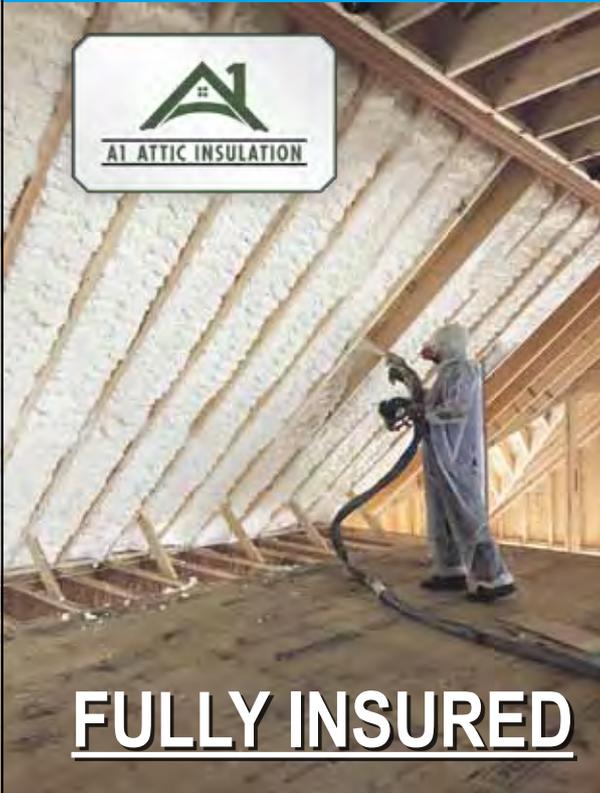
Christmas is a happy time for families and no one wants this to be ruined by a devastating injury caused by the unsafe use of these quad bikes or scramblers.”

Mr. David Storey, Director of Services for the Operations Department, Fingal Co Council said: “Parents need to be aware that scramblers and quad bikes have potentially lethal consequences if not used in the appropriate manner. Ensuring the safety of users of scramblers and quad bikes is our main priority. Fingal County Council is working closely with An Garda Síochána to address anti-social behaviour arising from the use of these vehicles.”

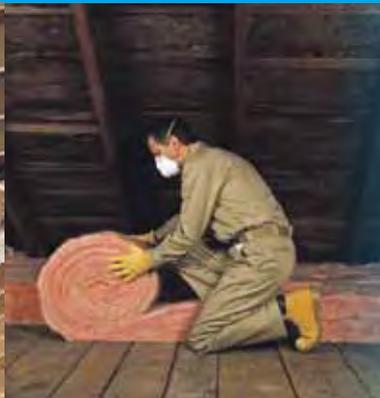
President of Motorcycling Ireland Sean Bissett, encouraged young riders to use the resources that are provided for them through MCI.

He said: “There are affiliated clubs all over Ireland who can provide guidance and advice for beginners. The resources are there for people to enter this sport in a safe and responsible way and we encourage all riders to contact their club and learn how to partake in this sport correctly.”

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# THE NATIONAL PROCUREMENT AWARDS 2019

Fingal County Council received a National Award at The National Procurement Awards 2019 in recognition of its ongoing efforts to improve procurement in the local authority. The Council secured the prestigious “Best Public Sector, Semi-State or Government Procurement Project of the Year” for establishing a Central Procurement Unit.

**L**aunched in 2010, The National Procurement Awards provide a much-needed platform to recognise and celebrate the most impressive and transformative procurement projects over the past 12 months and the teams who drive them.

The tenth annual National Procurement Awards ceremony took place at the Ballsbridge Hotel, Dublin. The awards ceremony saw trophies being awarded to some of Ireland’s most deserving procurement teams with 70 finalists from both the private and public sector competing in 15 awards

categories. Fingal County Council was shortlisted as a finalist in three awards categories.

Ms. AnneMarie Farrelly, Chief Executive said: “The Central Procurement Unit team has been commended by the Council’s Executive Management Team for successfully establishing itself in early 2019 and delivering a number of significant contracts on behalf of the organisation in a very short timeframe. The establishment of a Central Procurement Unit has also improved our Corporate Governance structures and has received a positive response from the Audit Committee and Local Government Auditor. It is a model that other local authorities will be interested in.”

Mr. John Quinlivan, Director of Services, Corporate Affairs & Governance, Human Resources and Information Technology said: “The Central Procurement Unit team have been very proactive to the needs of the Council’s Departments working collaboratively across the organisation on a number of strategically important procurements such as supply of electric vehicles, solar bins, an ICT Digital Transformation project and various professional services. The collaboration has also extended to working closely with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) on numerous procurement projects.”

Mr. Brian Murray, Procurement Officer, said: “We are delighted to be recognised by our peers in the procurement profession for our work in improving procurement within the local authority. The establishment of a Central Procurement Unit was a major internal collaborative project across all Council Departments and this award reflects the contribution played by all internal stakeholders.”

# WOULD BE ABDUCTOR CLAIMS IT WAS A JOKE

A Dublin man told gardai “it was a joke that went wrong” after he was charged in relation to the alleged abduction attempt of a woman aged in her late 60s.

**M**artin Gallagher (20) also said he was “sorry” after two charges were put to him, a court heard yesterday.

The accused, of Rusheeney Avenue, Hartstown, Dublin 15, is alleged to have falsely imprisoned the injured party while she was out walking.

Mr Gallagher is further accused of assault causing harm to the same woman at Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 7.

Anxious

Garda Paul Kirwan gave evidence of arrest, charge and cautioning the accused .

He told Dublin District Court that after the charges were put

to Mr Gallagher at 12.45am, he made no reply.

However, defence solicitor Michael Kelleher said his client had claimed he did reply to the charge and that he was “anxious” that this be noted by the court.

The court heard Mr Gallagher told gardai: “I’m sorry, it was a joke that went wrong” after being charged.

No application was made for bail and the accused was remanded in custody to appear in court again soon.

Judge Bryan Smyth also granted the defendant legal aid after reviewing a statement of means.

Mr Gallagher, who was wearing a navy tracksuit and did not speak during the hearing, blew a kiss toward a supporter in the public gallery after being brought into court.

A garda investigation was launched on Monday morning after officers received reports of an alleged attempted abduction at Martin Grove, Blackhorse Avenue, at around 7.30am.

A witness appeal was issued and the following day a man was arrested as part of the investigation.

In a previous statement, a garda spokesman said detectives believe that at around 7.30am on the day in question, “the injured party spoke briefly to an elderly lady who was walking a dog. They met close to Cumiskeys pub”.

“Gardai are anxious to speak to this person who was walking their dog and who may be in a position to assist with the investigation,” he added.

“Anyone with information should contact Blanchardstown Garda Station on 01-6667008.”



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**1**

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**VOTE 2 Emer CURRIE**

# BUDGET PASSED WITH STRONG SUPPORT

Fingal County Council has adopted a budget of €269m for 2020 with 33 voting in favour, two voting against and four either absent or abstaining. The council says the aim of the budget is to provide services and investment designed to improve the county as a place in which to live, work and invest.



It is an increase of €32m from 2019 and is the equivalent of €911 per head of population. The 2020 Budget will enable the Council to continue managing the on-going demands of the fast-growing and youngest county in Ireland.

The Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Eoghan O'Brien said: "The budget process began as soon as the new Council came together in June and I want to acknowledge the work done by my colleagues on the Corporate Policy Group as well as the staff in the different sections of the Council. Despite the challenges we faced we have still been able to provide for a modest increase in services which shows that Fingal County Council is a well-run and prudently-managed Council."

Almost €5m has been ring-fenced for additional investment in local services such as street cleaning, parks maintenance and other operational activities as well as housing and homelessness. This sum includes the €2m raised by the decision by councillors in September to only reduce the Local Property Tax by 10%.

At the Budget meeting, councillors decided to apply a 40% refund on vacant commercial properties to provide funding for a number of areas including Climate Action projects and parking enforcement.

"This is the third year that our councillors agreed not to reduce the Local Property Tax by the maximum 15% and that has allowed us to spend an extra €2m per year on services that directly improve the areas where our citizens live," said Fingal County Council Chief Executive AnnMarie Farrelly. "It is a significant amount of money and will mean that by the end of 2020 we will have spent an additional €6m, that we would not have had otherwise, on a variety of improvement works in our towns and villages."

An additional €200k has been set aside in the Budget to provide support for remedial works to community facilities which are not in the Council's ownership. This is in response to issues which have been highlighted by councillors in recent months.

Three key core objectives have been set out in the 2020 Budget. The main priority is to continue investment in the

Housing and Community areas as well as maintaining service delivery and continuing to develop the economic and community plan for Fingal which supports job creation, tourism and sustainable communities.

**The €269m Budget can be broken down as follows:**

- €73.6m - Housing and Building;
- €28.6m - Road Transport and Safety
- €18.5m - Water Services
- €24m - Development Incentives and Controls
- €47.7m - Environmental Protection
- €45.2m - Recreation and Amenity
- €1.1m - Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare
- €31.0m - Miscellaneous Services

The 2020 Budget has allowed for increases in several key areas across the Council. This increased expenditure provides for significant investment in the County and builds on the investment made in previous budgets.

There will be an increase in the funding of capital improvement works in the social housing stock as well as additional funding for traveller estate improvement works. There is also an increase in housing adaptation grants.

The Budget allows for increases across several areas within Operations including road maintenance, public lighting, traffic management and street cleaning. There is also additional funding of €200k for costs under the

Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024.

A capital provision of €2m has been provided towards the funding of the Swords Cultural Quarter. This underscores the Council's commitment to this key flagship project to deliver a County Library and Arts Facility in Swords. These are also more funding for heritage properties and expansion of events activities.

Ms Farrelly said: "It is vital that as the County continues to grow and that the services, infrastructure and facilities provided by the Council keep pace with this. This is reflected in the 2020 Budget and also our three-year Capital Programme 2020-2022 where we are committed to spending a further €619m on 236 individual projects across the county."

The recent rates revaluation carried out by the Valuation Office has resulted in a rates reduction for 77% of rate-payers in Fingal. The revaluation process has created a financial risk for the Council around a possible reduction in rates income arising out of the appeals process. In order to mitigate this, the Council has a reserve of €21.8m in the 2020 Budget to provide for this risk in the future. This reserve is funded by a combination of the Council's own resources and a mechanism in the Rates Limitation Order which allows for the inclusion of an amount to mitigate against future rates income losses. The Council has created this reserve without impinging or reducing services to the public.

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# ROUGH SLEEPERS DOWN BY 41%

Peter McVerry Trust, the national housing and homeless charity, has warmly welcomed a marked decline in the number of people sleeping rough in the city. The winter 2019 rough sleeper count has found that 92 people were sleeping rough on the night of 26th November, a 41% decline on winter 2018.

**P**at Doyle, CEO of Peter McVerry Trust said "We are encouraged to see such a significant drop in the official number of people sleeping rough. A 41% decline on last year's count is a hugely positive outcome and a welcome reduction at a time of huge challenges for people impacted by homelessness."

This drop is closely linked to an increase in resources provided by the DRHE in the form of additional emergency beds, intensified street outreach work by Peter McVerry Trust and Dublin Simon and an increase in Housing First targets for Dublin which has seen, and will continue to see, more homes secured for people who were sleeping rough across the city.

Peter McVerry Trust together with the DRHE and the four Dublin Local Authorities and with funding from the Department of Housing is now working on a new Housing

First programme which will deliver 630 tenancies for people impacted by rough sleeping by mid-2022.

"While we secure more options to house rough sleepers, the continuous efforts to add additional emergency accommodation provision has also ensured that the number of people sleeping rough has dropped. We now provide almost 700 emergency beds across the Dublin region. Obviously, there is much more to do given we have 92 people sleeping rough and Peter McVerry Trust continues to work to progress much needed emergency accommodation for people who are sleeping rough across Dublin.

Peter McVerry Trust was happy to work together with Dublin Simon and staff from the DRHE/DCC to ensure that appropriately qualified and experienced staff were available to carry out the official Winter rough sleeper count in an effective, sensitive and professional manner.



## ENVIRONMENT

Dublin is blessed with fantastic natural amenities, rivers, canals, coastline and green spaces not to mention the wonderful Phoenix Park at our doorstep. All through my political life I have devoted immense efforts to focus on these natural treasures. I have also been one of the few TDs to highlight the danger of toxic air pollution in our city.

- Over **12 years ago** I was the first local TD to organise a public seminar on climate change and its devastating implications.
- As Tánaiste, I initiated Ireland's first Climate Change Act to recognise the Paris Climate Treaty.
- In the coming decade there can be no let up to meet the international targets set for Ireland. In practice that means specific measures to retrofit homes to reduce harmful emissions, to accelerate the provision of extra buses and trains and to switch rapidly to renewable energies.

## CRIME

It appears that Ministers have been surprised at the distress in many communities over the escalating crime situation. On our streets, in our own neighbourhoods, crime gangs have a menacing presence that haunt many communities. Rival gangs engage in vicious turf wars that leave trails of death and destruction in their wake. This casts a long shadow as gang activities generate constant episodes of criminal behaviour, burglaries, car thefts and intimidation.

We need to have a constant visible Garda presence in neighbourhoods as well as the specialist units devoted to organised crime. I will campaign for more Community Gardai in Blanchardstown and improved resources for the Gardai in tackling serious crime.

## STANDING UP FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS

Dublin West has become the location of choice for many young families. That means a constant demand for school places.

I regularly meet parents who are upset that the school closest to them is unable to guarantee places for their children. That needs to be rectified as a matter of urgency. The budget for new schools was actually cut this year by €2 million: that cut has to be reversed to address the crisis in school places in some areas of Dublin 15.

In the Dáil I actively promoted the rights of children affected by ASD for recognition of special education facilities and will continue to do so.

## HOUSING

The housing emergency is a cause of immense stress to families and communities. Rents are now at an all time high.

Delivering an adequate supply of social and affordable homes is the key feature of Labour's alternative policy. The state must take the lead in building more homes on public land and support house building by councils and non profit bodies. Action is also needed to prevent hoarding of land by speculators through financial penalties.

## HEALTH

It is scandalous that so many additional billions have been allocated to health with so little to show for the money spent. There has been striking ineptitude in management of essential projects such as the Children's Hospital.

I want to see Connolly Hospital developed to include the Rotunda Maternity Hospital Transfer and the promised 100 bed Senior Care Unit.

## IRELAND: A MODERN SOCIETY

In the Dáil, I have been a prominent voice to secure equal rights for women and to promote an open society that respects diversity and tolerance.

- Dublin West is one of Ireland's most diverse and inclusive communities. I am proud of the efforts made by schools, workplaces, sports clubs and others to create a friendly environment for all.
- As an adopted person myself, I am disappointed that another Dáil term has passed with no progress to respect the basic rights of adopted people in Ireland to their personal information.
- There is still an unacceptable gender gap in pay, conditions and leadership roles.

**Joan Burton TD**

For my parents' generation there was an unwritten deal - you get an education or a trade, you work hard, you buy a home and start your family in your twenties.

**That deal doesn't exist anymore.**

Instead families with both parents working struggle to pay rent or a mortgage, as well as soaring childcare, health, education and transport costs.

**I am running** in this election because I want to see better **housing, healthcare, supports for families, transport and sustainable communities.**

**We deserve a better deal.**



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## WHITESTOWN RUNNER UP IN PRIDE OF PLACE AWARDS

There was great success for Fingal at the IPB Pride of Place Awards as Flemington, Balbriggan was awarded 'Best Urban Neighbourhood' and the residents of the Whitestown Estate, Dublin 15 were runners-up in the 'Best Housing Estate' category at the Awards in Kilkenny recently. 900 representatives from counties across Ireland gathered in the Lyrath Estate Hotel for the Annual Pride of Place awards, hosted by Kilkenny County Council.

**T**he neighbourhood of Flemington in north-west Balbriggan is one of the fastest growing new communities in Ireland and the new Community Centre in Flemington is the neighbourhood hub where many new clubs and groups have emerged in recent years.

The judges were highly impressed with the rich variety of active clubs in Flemington providing an inclusive environment for all who wished to participate in their activities. They were provided with an excellent presentation on the work of the various groups and saw for themselves the truly pioneering efforts to reach out to everyone in the community.

The area also takes in Bremore Castle which was restored in partnership with a DDETB training programme and gained national exposure as HQ for this year's Operation Transformation on RTE. The Flemington Local Development Group (FLDG) which is coordinated by the Fingal Community Development Office is a forum for representatives from the local community, local authority, state agency and local development in the Flemington area to work collaboratively to address issues emerging at a local level. With busy Foróige youth projects and a strong integration forum, the urban neighbourhood of Flemington is very much reflective of present day Fingal and modern Ireland.

Runners-up in the 'Best Housing Estate' category were the Whitestown Estate, Dublin 15 residents. The group has recently embarked on an ambitious community arboretum project to remember deceased members of the local community within the estate and were recognised for their hard work and dedication to their local area.

Speaking about the awards Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Eoghan O'Brien said: "I would like to congratulate the residents of Flemington and Whitestown for their fantastic community work which was recognised

in these awards. The Pride of Place awards are very special as they recognise the significant positive impact of the partnership approach between Local Authorities and community groups in building sustainable, inclusive communities that are great places to live, and that residents are right to be proud of."

Margaret Geraghty Director of Housing and Community praised the achievement saying: "These two Pride of Place awards for the Fingal area are a testament to the ongoing work of the Fingal Community Development staff in fostering relationships with and assisting local community and residents groups to bring about real and lasting improvements in their communities."

Chief Executive of Fingal AnnMarie Farrelly said: "Well done the Flemington and Whitestown communities and our own Community Development office on doing Fingal proud in the Pride of Place awards. This Urban Neighbourhood award for the Flemington area is yet another positive story for Balbriggan where Fingal County Council and Our Balbriggan are implementing an imaginative rejuvenation plan. The competition showcased how Fingal County Council is working in partnership with other agencies, local businesses and the community and voluntary sector to harness local pride and enthusiasm to build a vibrant and inclusive community in the Flemington area. The Our Balbriggan €20million-plus rejuvenation plan is an ambitious new vision for the town, which has been shaped by the views of its population following award winning public engagement which saw 4000 people responding."

Sponsored by IPB, the Pride of Place competition was initiated 18 years ago through a Co-operation Ireland programme to acknowledge the invaluable work undertaken by volunteers and those involved in local community development. It has grown into the largest competition recognising community development achievements on the island of Ireland.

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- *We need to kickstart far-reaching changes in transport, home retrofitting and energy use.*
- *We have to resolve the housing emergency by delivering affordable homes. The State must take a direct role in providing affordable homes and promoting high quality planning to secure sustainable communities.*
- *A vital must do is to deliver public transport improvements in both bus and electric commuter rail, including electrified rail on the Maynooth line.*
- *A growing community always requires extra school places, affordable childcare and green spaces.*

My experience as TD, Minister and Tánaiste gives me the know-how and commitment to be your voice on these issues.

***Beidh se mar pribhléad dom, mo lán dhícheall a dhéanamh ar bhúr son mar Teachta Dala.***

I would like to ask for your No.1 vote on Saturday 8th February.

Joan

[joan.burton@oireachtas.ie](mailto:joan.burton@oireachtas.ie)  
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# VOTE No.1



# LEINSTER HOUSE: A HISTORY

As we draw close to the 2020 general election we have decided to take a look at the home of the Oireachtas, Leinster House, wither aspiring candidates hope to soon take up residence.

**L**einster House was the former ducal residence in Dublin of the Duke of Leinster, and since 1922 served as the parliament building of the Irish Free State, predecessor of the modern Irish state, before which it functioned as the headquarters of the Royal Dublin Society. The society's famous Dublin Spring Show and Dublin Horse Show were held on its Leinster Lawn, facing Merrion Square. The building is the meeting place of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann, the two houses of the Oireachtas, and as such the term 'Leinster House' has become a metonym for Irish political activities.

Ireland's parliament over the centuries had met in a number of locations, most notably in the Irish Houses of Parliament at College Green, next to Trinity College, Dublin. Its medieval parliament consisted of two Houses,

a House of Commons and a House of Lords. Ireland's senior peer, the Earl of Kildare, had a seat in the Lords. Like all the aristocrats of the period, for the duration of the Social Season and parliamentary sessions, he and his family resided in state in a Dublin residence. (For the rest of the year, they used a number of country residences, notably Frescati House in Blackrock.)

In the history of aristocratic residences in Dublin, no other mansion matched Kildare House for its sheer size or status. When the Earl was made the first Duke of Leinster in 1766, the family's Dublin residence was renamed Leinster House. Its first and second floors were used as the floor model for the White House by Irish architect James Hoban, while the house itself was used as a model for the original stone-cut White House exterior. [

One famous member of the family who occasionally

resided in Leinster House was Lord Edward FitzGerald, who became involved with Irish nationalism during the 1798 Rebellion, which cost him his life. With the passage of the Act of Union in 1800, Ireland ceased to have its own parliament. Without a House of Lords to attend, increasing numbers of aristocrats stopped coming to Dublin, selling off their Dublin residences, in many cases to buy residences in London, where the new united parliament met

The 3rd Duke of Leinster sold Leinster House in 1815 to the Royal Dublin Society. In 1853 the Great Industrial Exhibition was hosted in its grounds. At the end of the nineteenth century, two new wings were added, to house the National Library of Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland. The Natural History Museum was built on the site. Part of this scheme intended to re-clad the house in more attractive Portland stone and extend the portico outwards (as opposed to being attached). This was not undertaken.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 provided for the creation of a self-governing Irish dominion, to be called the Irish Free State. As plans were made to bring the new state into being, the Provisional Government under W. T. Cosgrave sought a temporary venue for the meetings of the new Chamber of Deputies Dáil Éireann and Senate Seanad Éireann. Plans were made to turn Royal Hospital Kilmainham, an eighteenth-century former soldiers' home in extensive parklands, into a full-time Parliament House. However, as it was still under the control of the British Army, who had yet to withdraw from it, and the new Governor-General of the Irish Free State was due to deliver the Speech from the Throne opening parliament within weeks, it was decided to hire the main RDS Lecture Theatre attached to Leinster House for use in December 1922 as a temporary Dáil chamber.

In 1924, due to financial constraints, plans to turn the Royal Hospital into a parliament house were abandoned; Leinster House instead was bought, pending the provision of a proper parliament house at some stage in the future. A new Senate or Seanad chamber was created in the Duke's old ballroom, while wings from the neighbouring Royal College of Science were taken over as used as Government Buildings. The entire Royal College of Science, which by then had been merged with University College Dublin, was subsequently taken over in 1990 and turned into state of the art Government Buildings. Both the National Library and National Museum wings next to Leinster House remain used by as a library and museum and are not attached to the parliamentary complex. While plans were often made to provide a brand-new parliament house (sites considered included the Phoenix Park and the Custom House), the Oireachtas has remained permanently located in Leinster House.

Since then, a number of extensions have been added, most recently in 2000, to provide adequate office space for 166 TDs, 60 senators, members of the press and other staff. Among the world leaders who have visited Leinster House to address joint sessions of the Oireachtas are U.S. presidents John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Australian prime ministers Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, John Howard and French President François Mitterrand.

A number of monuments stand, or have stood, around Leinster House. Its Kildare Street frontage used to be



dominated by Queen Victoria, a large seated bronze statue by John Hughes, first unveiled by King Edward VII in 1908. Considering it inappropriate to have the British Queen overlooking the Irish parliament it was relocated to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in 1948, as part of moves by the Irish state towards declaring a Republic. It was re-erected in 1987 in front of the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney, Australia. Facing the garden front on its Merrion Square side, stands a large triangular monument commemorating three founding figures of Irish independence, President of Dáil Éireann Arthur Griffith, who died in 1922, Michael Collins and Kevin O'Higgins, the Chairman of the Provisional Government and the Vice-President of the Executive Council (deputy prime minister), both of whom were assassinated, in 1922 and 1927 respectively. Another statue commemorates the Prince Consort, Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, who held his major Irish Exhibition on Leinster Lawn in the 1850s.

The main building has undergone regular extensions from Victorian times, through to a major extension to create offices for TDs in the 1960s, to most recently the building of Leinster House 2000, a new block of offices built to the north of the original ducal palace.

#### The main extensions are:

- The victorian additions to the complex which contain the dáil chamber
- A 1930s addition which houses labour party tds and senators
- The so-called block 66 a five-storey office block which was built circa 1966 and which houses fine gael tds and senators, with two restaurants and two bars at ground-floor level and which houses the office suite of the leader of the largest party in the oireactas (currently fine gael) and the party's meeting rooms.

Leinster House 2000, a new millennium wing erected in 2000 and which houses members of all parties, committee rooms and contains the office suites of the leaders of Labour and Fianna Fáil

some modern offices across Kildare Street in Kildare House

the top floors of Agriculture House, the Department of Agriculture building which on those floors house offices for independent TDs and independent senators

offices on Molesworth Street which are used also by some members of the Oireachtas, most notably the office provided for former taoisigh.



# DRAÍOCHT LAUNCHES NEW SEASON OF 100+ EVENTS!

Draíocht flings open its doors for audiences again this Spring, presenting a whopping 100+ events to choose from, from comedy to music, theatre to movies and a full programme of events for families and young people. It all began in January with Panto Season with 17 fun-filled shows of ‘Robin Hood’ by Coolmine Panto Group.

**S**ir Robin of Locksley together with his Mother, Lady Rose Bud, drew swords and arrows with the money grabbing Sheriff of Nothingdoing, Sir Guy Sterling. Can Sir Robin rescue Maid Marion from the evil Sheriff? Fun and laughter were abundant with Robin’s Merry Men, Friar Tuck and his Snoring Monks and the Singing Nuns of Mirth. There was also a Relaxed Performance of Robin Hood without the sudden noises or bangs, restricted capacity, the ability to move around, softer and brighter lighting and music at a suitable level. Add to that a chill-out area with low lighting for parents/guardians to bring children who may have needed to have a little break.

February sees the return of Jon Kenny and Mary McEvoy in *The Matchmaker* by John B Keane! This is Michael Scott’s last run out of the iconic production so if

you haven’t had a chance to see it before, be sure and book ASAP as tickets have flown out the door!

A Holy Show (22 February) is a new comedy play by Janet Moran, based on the true story of the 1981 Aer Lingus hijacking by an ex-Trappist monk with a bottle of water as his weapon, the Pope as his nemesis, and a burning desire to know The Third Secret of Fatima. Step on the plane with us and experience this most Irish of hijackings. There’ll be music, nostalgia, heroism, praying, visions, romance (maybe), sex (maybe) and a special appearance by Our Lady (definitely).

Seamus O’Rourke brings Pdraig Pott’s *Guide to Walking to the Main Auditorium* 6th March, a play full of nostalgia and innocence based on a character who grew up in County Leitrim in the 70’s and 80’s! Later in March we have another play by the brilliant Deirdre Kinahan.

Halcyon Days, set in a nursing home, is about Sean and Patricia, one a languishing patient, the other a vivacious character with a zest for life!

We're excited to host 'Foster & Allen' and 'The Celtic Tenors' for the first time in Draíocht. The Bee Gees Story – Nights on Broadway return to Draíocht this January with two shows on Friday 24th & Saturday 25th January! The ever popular Reeling in the Showband Years have already begun selling their annual gig on Thursday 30th & Friday 31st January, compered by everyone's favourite showman Ronan Collins! Sharon Shannon, with her special guest Alan Connor will be Celebrating 30 Years in February bringing the traditional sounds of the accordion back to Draíocht's Main Auditorium. Staying with a traditional theme, The Liberties will bring the songs and story of the Dubliners back to our audiences on Thursday 5th March, when they perform their Tribute Show – All For Me Grog! Fans of Eagles and Fleetwood Mac will be thrilled to see an early highlight this coming April! The Illegals with Niamh Kavanagh will be performing their latest tour and are widely regarded as one of the best live tribute acts in Ireland!

If it's Comedy you're after this season's line up is a doozy! Neil Delamere's newest show, End of Watch, may not be the most romantic night out you'll experience this Valentine's Day but it will be the most hilarious! If you've ever seen '50 Ways to Kill your Mammy', you'll know how gas Baz Ashmawy is! His tour, Family Matters, takes you through how a half Egyptian/half Irish boy grew up in a council estate in Dublin as well as being raised single handedly by Nancy! We're delighted to welcome back Danny O'Brien, one of Ireland's most popular rising comedians in late March. This latest show is all about his near career ending knee injury, which nearly left him as a stand-up Comedian who couldn't... well stand! If you like Comedy Clubs, Laughter Lounge LIVE Tour might be right up your street! This April, The Laughter Lounge will hit the road to bring us a night of laughs this time in Draíocht, featuring Eric Lalor, John Colleary and Gar Murran!

Draíocht is delighted to be working with Mother Tongues Festival for the first time in 2020 to present a range of workshops and performances in different languages for all ages over 2 days in February.

From January, you'll be able to pick up a free Children's Gallery Guide to explore Draíocht's exhibitions and public spaces! Designed by a local TU Dublin Blanchardstown student, the guide comes complete with paper, clipboards, colouring pencils and a cushion! The first of our two Free Family Art Day's is Saturday 11th January, where you can make real Seaweed Sculptures! If Octopus, Clown-Fish, Crazy-Fish is more you're thing then keep Saturday 25th January free for exploring the kelp seaweed forest in our next exhibition Holdfast. Our next Sensory Friendly Family Screening in Draíocht's Studio will be the classic Disney Pixar animation Monsters Inc on Saturday 15th February. The volume and lights are lowered, the audience size is small and you will have the ability to make noise and move around freely during the screening if you wish! Favourites of Draíocht, Lords of Strut make a welcome return also in February with ABSOLUTE LEGENDS! If you know people who like banging moves, dizzying acrobatics, tantrums and riotous comedy then this is the perfect show! We open the

January season of films with a classic, Singin' in the Rain from 1952, featuring Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds and Donald O'Connor as well as that iconic musical scene in the lashing rain! The Farewell, a true life story from Director Lulu Wang, is making lots of noise amongst film fans! A Chinese family discovers their beloved Grandmother has only a short time to live, so they decide to keep her in the dark and schedule an impromptu wedding to gather everyone together! Maeve Higgins stars in Extra Ordinary on February 26th. It's the hilarious Irish comedy that is full of twists, turns, exorcisms and haunted wheelie bins! Everyone's favourite Tom Hanks, plays Fred Rogers in A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood in late March. Another true story it tells of the friendship between Mister Rogers and journalist Tom Junod.

Visual Arts: Our two Gallery spaces feature the exhibition Holdfast, part of the 12th Edition of Amharc Fhine Gall which is an annual exhibition commissioned by Fingal County Council's Arts Office. The Dublin 15 artist Ann Ensor is particularly interested in environmental issues and this exhibit is an immersive installation which explores the aesthetic properties of kelp seaweed. This exhibition is also joined by a PROJECT SPACE for Families! The project space runs until Sat 29 Feb and you can see a full list of details in Draíocht's Season Brochure or online [www.draiocht.ie](http://www.draiocht.ie).

**Neil Delamere's  
new show *End of  
Watch* at Draíocht -  
February 14th**



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**EDUCATION - SCHOOLS AND TU BLANCH**

With the rise in population there is a huge demand on schools and further education. An enormous amount of funding has been allocated to deliver many new schools nationally and for the extension and refurbishment of existing schools.

**In Dublin West, the following new schools were built and refurbished since 2016:**

- Powerstown ETNS, Tyrrelstown - **new**
- Gaelscoil an Chuillann, Mulhuddart – **new**
- Le Cheile Secondary School, Mulhuddart - **new**
- St. Mochta's, Clonsilla – new school buildings -**completed**
- Luttrellstown Community College (LCC) – **new sports hall and extension**
- Coláiste na Tulchann – new – opened as an **aonad** in extension of LCC
- Tyrrelstown Educate Together – **safety works**
- St Lukes, Tyrrelstown – **safety works**
- Castleknock Community College – **new - Sports Hall and extension**
- St Patricks JNS & SNS (Corduff) – **new school - construction to commence this summer**
- Pellettstown ETNS – **construction to commence this summer**
- Edmund Rice College Carpenterstown/Castleknock – **at advanced planning stage**
- New secondary Blanchardstown – **site acquisition stage**
- Scoil Sínead, Pellettstown – **site identified**
- Mary Help of Christians School – Scoil Eoin BNS and JBNS **at preliminary stage**
- St Joseph's School for Deaf, Cabra – **at project brief stage**

TU Dublin, a new University of Technology for Dublin was formally established in 2019 merging the campuses of IT Blanchardstown, Tallaght IT and Grangegorman.

**GARDAI**

Since 2016, the number of Gardaí in Dublin West has increased by over 50 and, there are now over 45 Garda vehicles attached to the Blanchardstown station. As a result of the recent spate of burglaries there are extra patrols, including unmarked Garda cars.

**HEALTH**

- New children's unit in Blanchardstown Hospital
- New stroke unit opened at Connolly Hospital
- New Corduff Primary Care Centre
- Roselawn Health Centre refurbishment planned
- Income limits increased for over 70's medical cards
- Waiting list for operations down considerably and falling

**SPORTS - SPORTS CAMPUS**

**The National Sports Campus is going from strength to strength, it is comprised of the following:**

National Aquatic Centre, covered pitches for FAI, IRFU, training pitched for Hockey Ireland and Cricket Ireland, National Institute for Sport, Gymnastics Centre, Sport HQ, Special Olympics and Sports Council offices, Horsesport arena. GAA's National Games Development Centre, National Indoor Arena and running track. A Velodrome and Badminton centre has been granted permission and will commence soon.

**SPORTS GRANTS**

Fine Gael in Government has continued to provide much needed funding, under the Sports

Capital Programme, for local clubs/organisations to improve their facilities and buy new equipment. Since 2016, over €1m has been granted to more than 20 clubs in D15 and D7

**CHILDCARE / SUPPORTING PARENTS**

As part of the continuing Government's commitment to families, since 2016 we:

- Extended the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to 2 years
- We introduced the Access and Inclusion Model to enable children with disabilities to access the ECCE scheme.
- The National Childcare Scheme (NCS) was introduced and it is the first ever statutory entitlement to financial support for childcare.
- We will build on this by improving childcare subsidies in the next Government

**CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Fine Gael in Government has been taking Climate Action. Measures have been included in every budget since 2016 to improve the environment. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will stabilise our climate and environment for all of us but particularly for future generations. But it is beneficial in other ways - warmer homes, cleaner air, shorter commutes etc. It is also about creating new jobs, new wealth and new businesses for the future. It is good economic policy, it is good social policy, it is good environment and we just need to make it happen.

Last year we published a new Climate Action Plan for Ireland. This sets out the actions we must take as Government, as communities and as individuals. It is being supported by National Development Plan investment of €8.1bn and a further €13.7bn of investment by our State companies.

**Every budget since 2016 has included hundreds of millions in funding for various measures to benefit the environment.**

**The following are some examples:**

- The Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)
- An additional €36 million to expand the energy efficiency programmes including a fund of €17 million to rollout the Renewable Heat Incentive and schemes to incentivise the uptake of electric vehicles.
- The extension of VRT relief for hybrid vehicles.
- An additional €70m for Environment and Waste Management Programme
- €103.5m for grant improvements in forestry
- Budget 2020 increased carbon tax to raise €90m in additional income which is being ring fenced for climate action measures. Among other measures the budget provided €9m for greenways and urban cycling projects; €8m to maintain grants for purchase of electric cars and €3m for electric vehicle infrastructure.

# FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL SECURES €100,000 FOR COMMUNITY SPORTS INITIATIVES

Fingal County Council has secured €100,000 in funding for sporting initiatives benefiting traditionally underserved communities.



**C**ommunity Sports and Physical Activity Hubs are a major element of the funding, with \$45,000 allocated for Tyrellstown/Mulhuddart and €35,000 for Balbriggan.

The Hubs provide information, support and advice on a wide range of sports and physical activities to bring local people together and provide a home for local clubs and sports organisations.

€10,000 is allocated to the Youth Leadership project involving specialised Sports Leadership training to produce trained, responsible and confident volunteers who can help to deliver sport and recreation initiatives within their community.

The programme has the potential to impact on both early school dropout rates in disadvantaged areas and dropout rates from sport within the targeted age group.

€10,000 is also allocated for the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme, which aims to reduce barriers to sports participation for people with a disability through provision of equipment and minor infrastructure.

This initiative will help people with a disability to engage with their community, develop their social networks, and encourage them to develop their skills, talents and abilities.

Mayor of Fingal Cllr Eoghan O'Brien said: "I am delighted to see that Fingal's sports programmes will receive assistance from the Dormant Accounts Fund.

"Sport and physical activity should be for everyone to enjoy, and the Fingal Sports Office programmes are exciting steps towards this."

Fingal County Council Director of Services for Housing and Community Margaret Geraghty said: "On behalf of the Council's Sports Office I welcome the provision of funding for these important projects.

"The funding for Community Sports and Physical Activity Hubs, Youth Leadership, and Sports Inclusion Disability initiatives will go far towards improving the health, wellbeing and social cohesion of communities across Fingal."

The funding will be administered by Sport Ireland, and aligns closely with the National Sports Policy and the National Physical Activity Plan.



# Fingal libraries – enhancement of digital technologies infrastructure throughout its branch library network

The enhancement of Fingal Libraries digital technologies infrastructure was launched by the Mayor of Fingal Cllr. Eoghan O’Brien at Malahide library on Monday November 25th, in the company of Fingal Chief Executive AnnMarie Farrelly, Director of Housing & Community Margaret Geraghty and County Librarian Betty Boardman.

I have been scheduling regular meetups with many of you at my office in Ongar or when I called over to you, schools had been called out as a great concern for parents. Not only in terms of availability of places but also the locations of primary and secondary schools. I have now raised this with both An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Minister Joe McHugh in the Department of Education and expressed the requirements for our growing area.

Fingal libraries has launched this enhancement to its digital technologies infrastructure on foot of an investment by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring TD. This will result in enhanced library spaces and services for the public.

Fingal County Council’s contribution to the funding demonstrates commitment to and belief in public libraries as centres of learning and engagement in the community.

The creation of new meeting spaces, the installation of Tablet lending devices and Magic Table software will attract existing and new users of all ages to library service points and form part of an initial phase of the rolling out of new ICT facilities and services.

Speaking at the launch Mayor of Fingal Eoghan O’Brien said: “It is a pleasure to be here today to launch the new

innovative ICT technologies at Fingal Libraries. This will enable libraries to remain at the forefront of advances in technology thereby benefiting Fingal citizens”

Director of Housing and Community, Margaret Geraghty welcomed this enhancement to Fingal libraries digital technologies infrastructure saying: “I would like to reiterate the importance and huge popularity of the library service in the community and these new digital services are part of the ongoing enhancement of our range of services.”

County Librarian Betty Boardman, said: “This funding has come at a very good time for Fingal Libraries as it will assist us in achieving two of the main objectives in our Development Plan published earlier this year – to continue to provide high quality, welcoming, accessible spaces which meet the needs of library users and to reinforce the position of libraries in the community as key points of access to information technology and digital services.”

The new services launched include the Magic Table installed at Rush and Malahide libraries. The Magic Table equipment consists of a projector that displays pre-loaded interactive games / images on to any surface below. These interactive games have been specifically designed for people with mid to late stage dementia and children with sensory issues.

New Meeting Pods with charging points have been installed at Blanchardstown, Malahide and Balbriggan libraries. These Meeting Pods are particularly useful for students or SMEs working on collaborative projects whether or not requiring access to wifi.

The Hublet tablet lending device has been installed at Baldoyle, Rush, Howth, Garristown and Donabate libraries. These hand held tablets allow access to apps for children and adults and can be used to print documents at the self-service photocopiers at these libraries.

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## SUCCESSFUL LANDLORD TRAINING SCHEME, ORGANISED BY FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL AND RTB, TAKES PLACE

Fingal County Council, in partnership with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), organised a successful “Betterlet: Accredited Landlord Training Scheme”, the first of its kind to be rolled out in the county.

**T**he course covered a number of areas including pre-tenancy guidelines, the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords, dispute prevention, minimum standards and information on how to manage a tenancy from beginning to end. At the end of the session, the participants undertook a short assessment. The accreditation remains valid for two years.

In 2017, Fingal County Council established a new unit in the Housing Department with responsibility for proactively inspecting all private rented properties in Fingal to ensure compliance with the relevant regulations.

To date, this unit has carried out in excess of 5,000 private rented property inspections and has exceeded the targets set by the Department of Housing for the inspection of private rented dwellings. There are currently 21,034 registered private rented properties in Fingal.

Cllr Duncan Smith, chairperson of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee, said: ‘This was a very welcome initiative from Fingal County Council and the RTB. It is important that landlords, who play an important role in providing homes across the county, understand the complex regulatory framework that exists within the sector. And so from that point of view it was satisfying to see that the Fingal event was so well attended.’

Director of Housing and Community Margaret Geraghty said: “Fingal County Council was delighted with the success of this partnership with the Residential Tenancies Board which saw 30 landlords attend the day-long Fingal event. One of the strategic objectives of our new Corporate Plan 2019-2024 is to facilitate good quality private rented accommodation standards to enhance the quality of life for individuals and families living in the private rented and events like this one play a key role in achieving that goal.”

# Local artist installation at Draíocht

Fingal County Council Arts Office is delighted to present a new commission Holdfast from Ann Ensor for the 12th edition of Amharc Fhine Gall in collaboration with Draíocht.

**H**oldfast is an immersive installation combining sculpture, drawing, sound and text which explores the aesthetic properties and the environmental significance of kelp seaweed. This is Draíocht's first exhibition to address directly the issue of climate change. Holdfast is accompanied by an interactive Children's Project Space designed by Orla Goodwin and located in the First Floor Gallery; a public engagement programme facilitated by Draíocht's Artist Team; and an artist's book, designed by Siobhán Griffin, Alphabet Soup.

Kelp has been present for millions of years and is hugely important in reducing and sinking carbon from the atmosphere to the sea floor bed. Kelp acts as a wave barrier and helps prevent coastal erosion. It shelters and feeds hundreds of marine entities in its holdfasts and fronds. With kelp now coming under threat from excessive storm damage, pollution, and mechanical cutting, this new commission is a timely exploration of the environmental significance of this natural material and of its aesthetic properties.

The work for this exhibition arose from drawings and research the artist carried out during a residency at The Ballinglen Arts Foundation, Ballycastle, County Mayo in March 2019. Ensor says: I went with a vision to respond to the area and, as a starting point, to study the impact of plastics on the beaches and ocean in the locality. However, it was the voice of Kelp on the beach that I responded to and I found I was compelled to study it and create work around it. Having researched the topic by talking to local people, reading and drawing, Ensor came to realise the importance of Kelp to the ocean ecology and its critical role in the carbon cycle which in Ensor's words is synonymous with life. Kelp has an extraordinarily fast growth rate and exports a large portion of its biomass out into the deep sea, thereby permanently removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Its unique and vital role is not widely understood but among those who do appreciate its significance, there is real concern about the selling of seaweed harvesting rights and the impact of mechanical cutting leading to the over-industrialisation of the Kelp forests.

Throughout the work the motif of the spiral suggesting growth and time cycles is apparent. The notion of absorption also pervades the work. The human respiration system is based on the absorption of oxygen and food energies. As a living



organism, Kelp has an exceptional capacity for the absorption of carbon and water and this is mirrored in how elements of the work are made. The spiral sculpture has been made by 'steambending'. This process involves the oak absorbing water in the form of steam. In turn carbon is produced and coats the exterior of the wood. Ensor says: I have made this work to raise awareness of the kelp forests. I want people to consider our role in the environment and the importance of understanding that we are all entangled together on this planet which we share with all the other forms of life.

Ann Ensor is a visual artist based in Dublin 15 whose work combines sculpture, drawing, sound and text to explore environmental issues central to her practice. Ensor has just completed a residency at The Ballinglen Arts Foundation, North Mayo. Recent exhibitions include Matter Has No Density, Pallas Studios (2018); Heavy Weather at The Complex (2018); RHA Summer Show (2018); Kfest, Kerry (2018) and RUA (2019). In 2017 she was a finalist in the RDS Visual Arts Awards Exhibition, curated by Nick Miller. Ensor holds an MFA Degree in painting (2017) from NCAD where she originally graduated in 2015 with a BA (1st Hons) in Fine Art/Sculpture.

Holdfast was officially launched on 12 December 2019 by Councillor Tom Kitt, with special guest, Catriona Fallon, Visual Arts Curator Siamsa Tíre and Co-Founder Green Arts Initiative, Ireland. It runs until 29 February 2020.

Amharc Fhine Gall (Fingal Gaze) is a bi-annual exhibition commissioned by Fingal County Council's Arts Office and presented at Draíocht. Amharc Fhine Gall supports ambitious new artworks from artists at all stages of their career seeking to expand their practice through exploring new ideas, different media or variations in scale so as to take their work in new directions. Amharc Fhine Gall was initiated in 2004 by Fingal County Council Arts Office to celebrate the wealth of artistic talent in the county.



# O'Gorman Elected Chair of JPC

**Green Party Cllr. Roderic O'Gorman has been elected at Chairperson of the Fingal Joint Policing Committee at its first meeting this morning. Cllr O'Gorman represents the Castleknock ward of Fingal County Council, is the Green Party's spokesperson on Justice and is a candidate for Dublin West in the forthcoming General Election.**

I'm delighted that my colleagues in Fingal County Council have supported me for this important role. Every resident in Fingal should feel safe within their own community. Right now, this isn't always the case. I'm looking forward to using my position as Chairperson to drive the development of the JPC Six-Year Strategic Plan, outlining how Fingal County Council and the local Garda Stations can work together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour", stated Cllr O'Gorman.

"As a member of the previous Fingal JPC (2014-19), I was successful in getting statistics on domestic violence incidents reported upon at each of our meetings. I want to see the focus on this issue continue in this new term, along with a focus on preventing drug-related crime".

"The JPC gives councillors the opportunity to question the Gardai on the operations that they are undertaking locally and highlight particular issues that we become aware of. It's really important that the Gardai are held accountable

in this way to the communities that they serve", stated Cllr. O'Gorman.

The Fingal Joint Policing Committee is made up of county councillors, Oireachtas members, the Gardai, and statutory bodies like the North Dublin Drugs Task Force and Safer Blanchardstown along with community representatives from the Public Participation Network (PPN). It allows questions to be put to the Gardai on a range of issues and the exchange of information about the various strategies that are being undertaken locally to tackle different offences. The Gardai are represented at meetings by Chief Superintendents and Superintendents. Meetings of the JPC take place four times a year, alternating between Swords and Blanchardstown. Four public meetings are also held in April each year across Fingal, where members of the public are invited to come and discuss issues related to crime and public safety in their own area.



# BUSY END TO 2019 FOR FCC

Fingal County Council's Operations department recently participated in a cross-community initiative in Blanchardstown that saw 20 trees planted in Corduff Park.

**T**his event was organised as part of a Sustainability and Community Initiative on behalf of GLS who sponsored the purchase of the trees to facilitate the enhancement of Corduff Park. GLS identified the initiative as a fitting opportunity to give back to the local community while commemorating 20 years in operation and as part of their 'Think Green' program, which was launched in 2008.

The objective was to get as many groups within the Corduff and surrounding areas involved to develop a sense of ownership and protection for these new trees among the residents and public users of Corduff Park.

The groups who took part were GLS, Fingal County Council staff and crews, first year students and teachers from Riversdale Community College as well as pupils and teachers from second, third and fourth class in St Patrick's Junior and Senior National Schools and Clean-Up Corduff representative. Cllr Breda Hanaphy was also in attendance to help with the planting.

Speaking of the initiative, Mayor of Fingal Cllr Eoghan O'Brien said: "I am delighted to see the effort being made to enhance Corduff Park and to see schoolchildren get involved in the planting of the trees. Hopefully this will help to instil community and environmental values in them from a young age."

Fingal County Council Director of Operations, David Storey

said: "This initiative is one which will benefit the current users of Corduff Park and will hopefully encourage new visitors. It generated a great sense of community and positivity among the groups who took part in the event."

In other news, Fingal County Council has been named Local Authority of the Year at the InBusiness Recognition Awards 2019. The award was accepted by Deputy Mayor of Fingal Cllr Tom Kitt at the awards ceremony held in the Westbury Hotel in Dublin.

Cllr Kitt said: "I am delighted to accept the InBusiness Award for Best County Council. A key part of our mission statement is to make Fingal the best place in Ireland to do business in and winning this award for the second successive year indicates that the work we are doing on the ground is having a positive effect on the business community."

Cllr Kitt added: "There is a growing recognition amongst all stakeholders of the importance of local authorities and our ability to get things done. We are the closest government agency to the citizen, and business, and are therefore best placed to deliver services directly to them."

Fingal County Council Chief Executive AnnMarie Farrelly said: "It is a great honour to receive this accolade in recognition of our efforts to improve the quality of services we deliver to all our stakeholders. Part of our vision for Fingal is to make it a good place to do business in, so it is particularly pleasing to be recognised for our efforts in this area."

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# Stephen Kenny lends support at launch for Grassroots Fingal's Futsal programme

Futsal, the popular international indoor football game which focuses on players' ground skills, will have its 12th outing this winter in Fingal thanks to a joint initiative between FAI, Fingal County Council and Swords Pavilions Shopping Centre.

**T**he programme caters for young players from U8 to U11 to help showcase their skills in an environment that the likes of Xavi, Iniesta and the great Messi grew up with. Four venues are being used from Corduff in D15, Applewood in Swords, Castlelands in Balbriggan and Gormanston park.

Stephen Kenny, Ireland u21 International manager attended to help launch the highly anticipated annual six weeks of futsal for 1000+ players in Fingal.

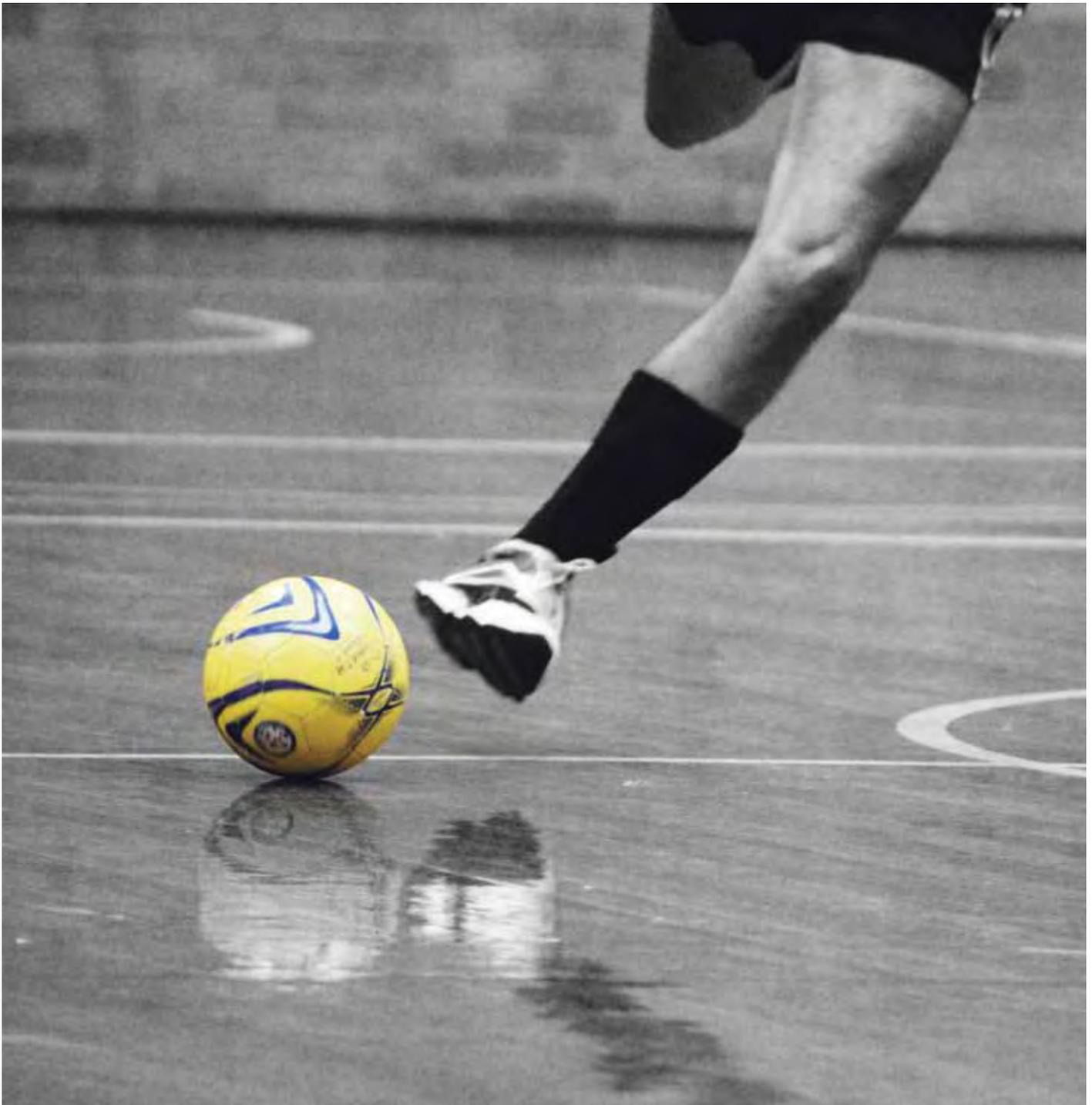
The Mayor of Fingal, Cllr. Eoghan O'Brien, said: "Futsal is a terrific way for young players to learn and improve their skills while enjoying the game. In partnership with the FAI and Swords Pavilions Shopping Centre this programme has gone from strength to strength each year and continues to provide a great service to the young kids

of the county during the winter period."

Margaret Geraghty, Director of Housing & Community, added: "Fingal County Council appreciates the commitment of the FAI and the support of the Pavilions Shopping Centre to stage this great initiative. Together with our own sports team, it is a great way along with building in health and nutrition advice for young people, to develop their football skills in a fun environment."

Run in conjunction with Fingal County Council's sports department and community partner Swords Pavilions it ensures the youngest players do not go weeks without playing due to pitches being unplayable. There are also the well-known technical and decision-making aspects of futsal which ensures there are goals and skills aplenty.

Commenting on this year's Futsal program Paul Keogh,



FAI/FCC development officer said: 'We are starting to feel a genuine interest and growth in futsal from grassroots coaches in Ireland. It has taken several years, but coaches are now really embracing futsal as a tool to aid players development and enjoyment of the game. It was fantastic to have Stephen Kenny present and his attacking philosophy sits very well with futsal which is all about freedom of expression and fearless play. Stephen spoke very favourably of futsal and its potential in Ireland. My colleagues Sharon Boyle, Jamie Wilson and Paul Breen were delighted with the number of clubs present at the launch night. Support from Swords Pavilions once again is very welcomed and with their support, we will again be linking this year's futsal to our healthy eating initiative 'make nutrition your goal'.

Fingal County Council Senior Sports officer Niall McGuirk

added: 'Futsal is a means for Fingal Sports Office to assist with participation levels and physical activity. Using sport for social and physical wellbeing is of paramount importance and having the added angle of nutritional education once again this year is fantastic. Changing habits is a challenge but from evidence from last year this program really did succeed and it was great to see Swords Pavilions being acknowledged for their support at the recent Fingal Chamber awards'

Stephen Kenny added: 'I was really encouraged by the possibilities of futsal in terms of player development. The essence of attacking play combined with quick decision making is an approach I fully concur with. Some of the most talented players in the world have been exposed to Futsal in their youth which can only aid our future players.'

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