

ISSUE 50
SEP/OCT 2024

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our September / October edition of Little Village. We have an interesting article on how the grandees in Castleknock enjoyed the good life. A new poll shows huge public support for progressive policies for people who make Ireland their home.

Finally, where will we be on Friday 13th April 2029 when the Apophis Asteroid shoots past the Earth. Perhaps it's best not to dwell too much on that.

Until next time.

The Little Village Team

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Retailer of the Year award 2024

Congratulations to Eurospar Hartstown for making the final 30 of the National Retailer of the Year awards 2024. This is a massive achievement for this much sought after accolade.



Eurospar Hartstown has been at the heart of the local Community for decades and has been involved in and supported many local groups and events.

With people returning from far and wide for their amazing Thursday offers, incredible in store bakery, value and excellent customer rapport.

In fact they are renowned for their famous and delicious in house doughnuts. (Causing a bit of a storm on Social media after raving reviews)

Eurospar Hartstown is no stranger to awards having won Sustainable Retailer of the Year Award 2022.

They also employ up to 75 people locally and give that more personal feel to the shopping experience.

We want to wish them all the best for the final in Galway on 2nd November and would definitely recommend giving them a visit to see this incredible store and experience.



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Your History Your Home - Farmleigh House

Living in Grandeur. How Castleknock's Grandees Enjoyed the Good Life.

By: Mike Power



Clock Tower



Somerton House

Castleknock's Great Houses and Estates

In times past, Castleknock (Caislean Chucha or 'Chuchas's

Castle') has been the home of some of Ireland's wealthiest folk. Chucha was the wife of a famous Celtic chieftain, Conn, and so bereft was he at the death of his beloved wife that he proclaimed this area forever to be named Chucha's castle/home i.e. Castleknock: 'until the Day of Judgement.'

The sylvan surroundings here of the Liffey, Royal Canal and Phoenix Park proved irresistible in Victorian times for business magnates, the rising middle classes, and well-to-do politicians. This particular part of Ireland also had an Ascendancy pedigree, dotted as it was with the palatial homes and estates of the great

and the good Protestants of that day. Indeed, Dublin 15 has many Liffey-side mansions sited within its most attractive ambit.

Somerton House

Eventually Castleknock came to be divided between these (mainly) English families who had proven loyalty to the Crown, i.e. The Laidlaws at Abbey Lodge, The Godleys at Oatlands, the Brookes Baronets at Somerton House (Now Castleknock Golf Club and Resort) and, of course, most famous of all, the Guinnesses at Farmleigh House. Many of these families intermarried, founding dynasties in the process, and also invested both time and money in renovating and extending their houses and estates.

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Little chance of securing a mortgage

I am part of a generation faced with the prospect of living indefinitely in the childhood bedroom I grew up in.

There are more than 500,000 adults in my position, some of whom are in their thirties and forties. It is adding to a growing sense of hopelessness. Right now young adults have little chance of securing a mortgage and have found themselves locked out of home ownership.

Under this Government, home ownership rates have continued to fall while the average age a person can get a place of their own is rising. Over the last decade – during which time Fine Gael have been in power – house prices have skyrocketed. The gap between what people earn and what they can afford to buy has significantly widened.

Earlier this summer, average rents in Dublin 15 were more than €1,400 for a one-bed, rising to almost €1,800 for a two-bed. A family seeking to rent a three-bed home in the area would face paying more than €2,200 a month. This is pure madness.

We need a party in government that will stand up for the locked-out generation and treat the housing crisis as the emergency that it is. We deserve a government that will significantly ramp-up the delivery of affordable and social homes and put the needs of people before the interests of big developers and vulture funds.

That is why so many of us still living at home with our parents feel shut out and ignored. There is an overwhelming sense that no one ever planned for us; that nobody is listening.

However, I remain hopeful that things can change and workable solutions to the housing crisis can be found – but not by this Government.

It is clear that it is going to take a general election to make a difference.



Ellen Murphy is the Social Democrats' general election candidate for Dublin West



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Dear Resident

I am giving updates on a few issues which I have been working on. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

John

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY AT TRAIN STATIONS

Following concerns raised by residents who are wheelchair users about the lack of accessibility at Coolmine, Clonsilla and Broombridge train stations, particularly the extraordinary requirement to give advance notice of travel to secure a temporary ramp, I asked the Active Travel section of Fingal Council to write to Irish Rail, seeking urgent short-term measures to improve accessibility. This motion was agreed unanimously by the local Area Committee on 5th September.

Motion: Councillor J. Walsh

"That the Chief Executive write to Irish Rail requesting they implement essential short-term measures as a matter of urgency, such as raised platform humps to improve accessibility for wheelchair users at train stations in this Local Electoral Area, as they are often inaccessible to people with disabilities."

While Irish Rail have given commitments to include lifts and accessible pedestrian bridges in the DART+West project, this is still four to five years away and people with disabilities should not have to wait several years for equal access to public transport.

PEDESTRIAN-CYCLE LINK BESIDE GRANARD BRIDGE

I recently received an update on the proposed pedestrian-cycle bridge beside Granard Bridge, Castleknock.

Question: Councillor J. Walsh

"To ask the Chief Executive to provide an update on the plans and timeline for the development of a pedestrian and cycle link across the railway line and Royal Canal adjacent to Granard Bridge in Castleknock?"

Reply:

The Planning & Strategic Infrastructure Department is currently procuring a Single Party Framework for Engineering Consultancy Services, allowing appointment of a Design Team for design of a new proposed Pedestrian and Cycling bridge over the Maynooth rail line and Royal Canal at Granard Bridge on Castleknock Road.

This proposed bridge will form an integral part of the walking and cycling route for Blanchardstown to Phoenix Park which is a proposed route in the NTA's Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan and the proposed bridge project will also include a footpath and cycle track to run alongside the Castleknock Road from Roselawn junction to Park Lodge junction.

The appointment of the Engineering Consultants Design team is expected to take place in September and works will then begin on the project concept and route options.



DRONES

Recently I have had a multitude of queries about noise and other impacts of drone flights across Dublin 15. I asked the Planning Enforcement section of Fingal Council for an update on any breaches of planning due to unauthorised drone bases. Planning Enforcement recently confirmed that they issued an Enforcement Notice at the Clonsilla Inn which required the removal of 'drone landing pads, associated site office, security fencing and any other associated drone infrastructure.' A similar investigation is ongoing in relation to the use of Junction 6, Old Navan Road, for drone flights.

We need effective regulation of drones to prevent noise pollution, intrusion into privacy and impact on wildlife and ensure proper planning and input from local communities.

CRISIS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

The current system of childcare is broken – it's not working for parents, children or many small providers. A publicly funded, universally accessible system of early childhood education and care is the norm across European countries, while our system is poorly funded, fragmented and cannot provide enough places for children.

- I am campaigning for a public system for early childhood education and care, which expands places and guarantees affordable childcare to families, operating alongside existing providers.
- I am also lobbying Fingal Council to develop a new policy to make space available in new and existing community facilities to facilitate community and affordable childcare.



*Working with
Cllr Mary McCamley*



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Classes are structured around the baby's natural play rest play cycle. We start every class with our signature song 'Say Hello To The Sun', and we finish every class with our 'Wave Goodbye' song.

Did you know? I attended classes with my daughter and I loved it so much, well.... Here I am! My first class was my first experience with my baby outside our home and on my own. I was deep in the trenches of postnatal depression and sleep deprivation, but when the class started and I cuddled my baby girl I knew at that moment I had found my place & I knew we would be ok.



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More information can be found at the website.
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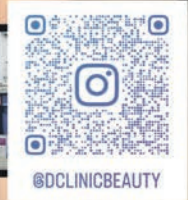


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*My name is Diana
I'm a Practice nurse level 7 with over 10 years experience in Beauty and Aesthetics treatments, setting the standard in skin health and new innovation. I started my career as a freelance to grow as a salon now, with clients supporting and hard work.*

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CLLR ELLEN TROY

Aontú Cllr Ellen Troy has been a longstanding community activist, supporting countless local initiatives across the wider D15 area.

She was recently elected to Fingal County Council on her first attempt, testament to her unwavering work on the ground. Ellen has a strong sense of social justice and is dedicated to serving the people of Dublin West in the face of a government that has decimated public services and stripped communities of their hopes and dreams for the future. She is a fresh voice for Dublin West, advocating common-sense solutions and seeking to give our young people and families a reason to stay in the country and use their talents and skills to build a better future for all.

Shocked at what she describes as the lack of accountability in Government, Cllr Troy said that she is committed to holding a mirror to “public representatives who are not exercising prudence with taxpayers’ money”.

“A Government that is playing fast and loose with the public purse as evidence by the recent ‘Bicycle Shed’ debacle, together with the fact that it tried to deprive the public of the €13 Billion from the Apple Tax windfall is one that is not serving the people and needs to be held accountable”.

“Lack of accountability is an issue that is coming up time and time again on the doors in my constituency of Dublin West. At a time when the country is rolling in money, we have the worst homeless crisis in history, we have record numbers of Gardai leaving the force, record numbers of young Doctors leaving our country and spiralling crime”.

Cllr Troy, who sits on the Blanchardstown Drugs and Alcohol Task Force says falling Garda numbers are ‘shocking’ and a ‘wake up call’ to the Government to “get a handle on the scourge of drugs in West Dublin for

once and for all”.

She says

“There is hardly an area of Dublin West that is untouched by drugs. The ease with which people of all ages and of all backgrounds can access them is frightening and the knock-on ramifications are huge. Crime, serious addiction, family breakdown, desolation and desperation are their hallmarks, and they leave indelible marks on their users. There is a marked increase in the use of Nitrous Oxide, commonly known as ‘Laughing Gas’ throughout Dublin West. As a Scientist, I know the dangers of this substance and it is desperately worrying to see young kids taking it. It is absolutely rife and again, points to the absence of Garda visibility on our streets. Community Gardai are the bedrock of an area, and we need many more of them in Dublin West as a matter of priority”.



HOUSING

Housing is a deep-seated emergency now.

I believe that many commercial units that are underutilised could be converted for residential use. Habitual objectors should be subject to some sanctions.

Speeding up the planning process should be the number one priority as it is simply taking Fingal County Council far too long to do up these houses for new tenants. There is no urgency whatsoever in what a desperate situation is. It both saddens and angers me to see boarded up houses, as not alone could these be new homes for human beings, they are unsightly and cause huge problems for those living near them. Residents who live in the vicinity of Lady’s Well Park in Mulhuddart have contacted me about vacant houses whose gardens are full of discarded rubbish, and this is attracting rats which is a huge and



dangerous issue in the area. Also, the Council has not maintained the Park where the grass is being allowed to grow wild, thereby attracting more dumping and vermin. I have written to Fingal County Council about this issue.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNMENT OVERSPENDING

“The Government has a once off golden opportunity to show it has some respect for the public purse by relocating the National Genetics and Genomic Testing Laboratory to Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown.

“We will soon be the proud owners of the most expensive children’s hospital in the world which in itself is quite incredible, yet despite the exorbitant cost it still can’t



vital service and is used for the testing of rare diseases. It is currently being done in Crumlin and the HSE is now on record for saying it is still to make a decision as to its new location”.

“It makes perfect sense to locate this facility at Connolly Hospital , there is lots of room there”.

“Instead, it appears that this Government will spend a fortune sending tests to private labs abroad. It is nonsensical and displays a complete lack of lateral thinking and frankly, ineptitude”

cater for all the services that should be located there”.

“We are being told that the cost is so high as it will be a one stop shop for everything, but this is patently untrue”.

“The National Genetics and Genomic Testing Lab is a

**For further information contact Cllr Ellen Troy
089 267 7330 ellen.troy@cllrs.fingal.ie**

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School Places for Children with Additional Needs

Councillor Tania Doyle (Ind Ongar Ward) describes the lack of school places and supports for children with additional need as a “Systemic failure by our State”

2023 statistics from the HSE found that 4,269 people had applied for an assessment of need in Dublin 15. June 2023 statistics found that the waitlist stood at 2,829, while an additional 1800 people were “overdue” for an assessment of need appointment as of June 30 last year.

Statistics for Blanchardstown found there was a 4-year waiting list for an appointment, while the figure jumped to 7-and-a-half-years in Blakestown.

The Department of Education previously said there will be 2,000 new places for children with additional needs in schools next year. According to the Dublin 15 Primary Principal Network, 111 children in primary schools are struggling to engage with staff and peers due to a lack of services. Cllr Doyle believes that schools are “effectively left to their own devices without any real support.”

Autistic children without school places have been “badly let down” by the State, Roderic O’Gorman has admitted. The Minister for Children and Green Party leader said the systems to identify the needs for areas needs to be improved. Cllr Doyle finds this new admission “difficult to accept” given that a public meeting took place on May 16, 2022, at the Carlton Hotel, Tyrrelstown which saw concerned parents, elected representatives (including the Minister) and school principals in attendance where it was clearly and unambiguously stated that places and support mechanisms were absent to the point of being non-existent.

Cllr Doyle has been involved with several grassroots organisations for several years calling for greater transparency and support mechanisms for children and young people with various levels of additional need such as the “Save our Children” campaign with local mother Lesley Anne Clare who campaigned on behalf of her daughter Sienna.

“We can no longer be a State that reacts, we must be a State that is proactive in its approach to the education and support of those most vulnerable within our community” says Cllr Doyle.



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DATA CENTRES – WHAT ARE THEY?

South Dublin County Council recently refused planning permission to Google Ireland for a new data centre at Grange Castle Business Park in south Dublin.



There are divided views on the number of data centres in Ireland but what is a data centre and why are they regarded as important to Ireland by many. A data centre is a facility that houses a large number of computer servers, networking equipment, and storage systems to manage, store, and process vast amounts of data. These centres are the backbone of the internet and modern digital operations, supporting everything from cloud computing to enterprise applications and online services.

Key Components of a Data Centre:

Servers: Powerful computers that handle processing and manage data.

Storage Systems: Devices like hard drives or solid-state drives where data is stored.

Networking Equipment: Routers, switches, and firewalls that connect the servers and manage data flow.

Power Supply and Backup: Redundant power systems, including generators and uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), to ensure continuous operation.

Cooling Systems: Air conditioning and other cooling technologies to prevent equipment from overheating.

Security Measures: Physical and cybersecurity measures to protect the data and the infrastructure, including biometric access, surveillance, and fire suppression systems.

What Data Centres Do:

Data Storage: They store data for businesses, governments, and online services. This data can range from customer records to streaming media.

Data Processing: Data centres process data for various applications, including web hosting, financial transactions, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics.

Application Hosting: Many businesses run their applications and services from data centres, including websites, databases, and enterprise applications.

Cloud Services: Major cloud providers like Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud operate vast data centres to provide scalable cloud computing resources.

Backup and Recovery: Data centres often provide backup and disaster recovery services to protect data against loss or damage.

Connectivity: They act as critical hubs for internet connectivity, allowing data to flow between different networks, users, and locations around the world.

Why Data Centres Are Important:

Reliability: Data centres ensure that critical services are available 24/7 with minimal downtime.

Scalability: Businesses can scale up their IT resources quickly without needing to build their own infrastructure.

Security: They offer high levels of physical and digital security to protect sensitive information.

Efficiency: Modern data centres are designed for energy efficiency and optimized performance, reducing operational costs.

Data centres are essential for the digital world, supporting everything from simple web browsing to complex business applications and the growing demand for data-driven insights. We have 82 data centres in Ireland, with a further 14 under construction and planning approved for 40 more, meaning a 65% growth in coming years.

Data centres are integral to Ireland's status as a tech hub, attracting multinational companies like Google, Facebook, and Amazon to establish their European headquarters. This appeal is driven by Ireland's well-educated workforce and favourable low corporate tax rate.

While data centres consume large amounts of energy, many are now implementing green initiatives to reduce their environmental footprint. This includes investing in renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and implementing sustainable practices like waste recycling.

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NEW POLL SHOWS HUGE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PROGRESSIVE POLICIES FOR PEOPLE WHO MAKE IRELAND THEIR HOME



Today (Thursday, 29th August), the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) released new data from an independent poll carried out with Ireland Thinks during the month of July.

The poll showed a 64% majority agreed that Ireland should welcome people who move here to make a better life for themselves or their families. (Compared to 18% who disagree)

The poll shows that a large majority of people understand that people move for love, for work, and for safety. The majority are welcoming and recognise that people who make Ireland their home should be treated fairly.

The results were very strong towards people moving to Ireland to work. 82% of people agreed that Irish companies should continue to be able to recruit people from outside the EU to work in sectors where we can't fill skills or labour shortages (Compared to 11% who disagree).

This is evident as the poll reveals significant public support for more progressive policies for those migrating to Ireland when it comes to issues such as family reunion rights, registration fees, employment permits and regularisation of those who become undocumented.

- 65% of people agree that people from outside the EU, recruited to work in Ireland through the work permit system should be allowed to bring their immediate family, spouse and or children when they come to work here (Compared to 24% who disagree)

- 65% of people agree that 'People from outside the EU, recruited to work in Ireland through the work permit system should have freedom to change to any job after 2 years (Compared to 24% who disagree)

- 88% of people believe a fee of less than €100 is

fair and reasonable for a migrant to have to pay for a residence permit card, instead of the €300 euro they are currently forced to pay every year.

- 69% of people believe that Ireland should give undocumented people the opportunity to come forward and legalise their status provided they can show they have been living and working here long term. (Compared to just 25% who believe we should force them to leave the country)

Neil Bruton, Campaigns Manager with MRCI, said, "When people come to Ireland to work, they face many challenges. Challenges like being separated from their families for years on end, facing poor working conditions and high rates of exploitation. On top of that they face high immigration fees that leave them struggling to make ends meet."

He continued "This poll shows that people in Ireland understand better than most the challenges people face when they move. People clearly support progressive policy changes that address the persistent challenges people face when moving to Ireland to make a better life."

Commenting on the public's support for better family reunion policies, Shiji Joseph, originally from India, who works as a healthcare assistant in a Nursing Home in Dublin said "It is heartwarming to see that most people understand how hard it is to live without your family and support change. It's deeply painful for me not being able to have my children and husband with me here."

Bruton concluded "Politicians need to listen to the view of the public as reflected in this poll and move to bring in progressive migration policies."



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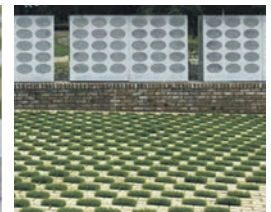
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Public invited to nominate volunteers for National Award



Nominations are now open for the 2024 Volunteer Ireland Awards.

The public is being invited to nominate volunteers in their community across 11 categories, with one volunteer being named Christine Buckley Volunteer of the Year at the ceremony in December. The Volunteer Ireland Awards take place annually and celebrate the immense contribution volunteers make to communities across Ireland. Nominations can be made at www.volunteer.ie/nominate.

Fingal VC Manager said: "Volunteers make an enormous contribution to our communities and in many cases, deliver critical services that may not otherwise be delivered. Their impact cannot be overstated and that's why it's so important to recognise their efforts at a national level. It's not just to show that we value what volunteers do but also to showcase the incredible work that goes on across the country and inspire others to get involved."

Aside from the 12 awards handed out on the night, every single volunteer that is nominated will receive a special thank you card from Volunteer Ireland. The awards are made possible thanks to the support of the Department of Rural and Community Development, and award partners Healthy Ireland.

Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Colm Burke, said: "I am proud that the Department of Health, through Healthy Ireland, is once again supporting the Volunteer Ireland Awards. This is a great opportunity to acknowledge the work of our volunteers who give their time willingly for the common good, helping to foster a sense of connection for people in their communities. I'd like to encourage you all to take the time to nominate a volunteer in your local area as a way of thanking them for all that they do."

This year's Volunteer Ireland Awards will take place in Dublin on 8th December.

About Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development organisation and a support body for all local Volunteer Centres in Ireland. Our vision is an Ireland where volunteering thrives. Our mission is to promote, support and advocate for excellent, accessible and inclusive volunteering. For further information, visit: <http://www.volunteer.ie/>.

About Fingal Volunteer Centre

Fingal Volunteer Centre is an independent organisation, which is part of a volunteer network that consists of 29 Volunteer Centres. Fingal Volunteer Centre is an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland. Our vision is a vibrant Fingal, where every person feels connected to their community through active participation in voluntary activities. And our mission is to promote the value of volunteering and increase the range and quality of volunteering in Fingal.

About the Volunteer Ireland Awards

Anyone can nominate a volunteer, and the 11 categories are:

- Arts, Culture & Festivals
- Campaigning & Activism
- Children & Youth
- Environmental & Animal Care
- Health & Wellbeing
- Safety & Emergency Services
- Social Inclusion & Community Support
- Sports & Recreation
- Small group (3-19 volunteers)
- Large group (20+ volunteers)
- Volunteer Manager

All individual awardees (except Volunteer Manager) are eligible for the overall Christine Buckley Volunteer of the Year Award. Nominations close at midnight on 11 October and can be made online at www.volunteer.ie/nominate.

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Ireland's Hidden Autumn Gems Off-the-Beaten-Path Destinations to Explore This Autumn

As the vibrant green landscapes of Ireland transform into a breathtaking palette of golds, reds, and oranges, autumn is the perfect time to explore the country's hidden gems. While popular spots like the Cliffs of Moher and the Ring of Kerry attract crowds year-round, there are plenty of lesser-known destinations that shine brightest in the Autumn. From serene hiking trails to scenic drives and quaint towns, here are some off-the-beaten-path locations where you can fully immerse yourself in Ireland's autumn magic.



Glen of Aherlow, County Tipperary

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1. Glen of Aherlow, County Tipperary

Nestled between the Galtee Mountains and Slievenamuck Hills, the Glen of Aherlow offers a tranquil escape with panoramic views and lush forests that burst into colour during the autumn months. This area is perfect for hiking enthusiasts and nature lovers looking for a quieter experience compared to more crowded spots.

- **Hiking Trails:** Try the Christ the King Loop, a moderate 10-kilometer trail that provides stunning vistas of the surrounding landscape, especially during the fall when the foliage is at its peak.
- **Where to Relax:** After a day of exploring, unwind at the rustic Coach Road Inn, a cozy pub offering hearty Irish fare and a warm atmosphere.
- **Events:** Check out local harvest festivals or the occasional pop-up markets showcasing crafts and produce from the area.

2. Lough Boora Discovery Park, County Offaly

Lough Boora is an enchanting blend of nature and art, featuring sculptures set amidst lakes, wetlands, and wildflower meadows. This reclaimed bogland is stunning in autumn, with its golden reeds and serene waters creating a perfect setting for a peaceful stroll or a leisurely bike ride.

- **Hiking Trails:** The park's Sculpture Park Walk is an easy route that combines outdoor art installations with the vivid colours of autumn.
- **Scenic Drive:** Take a leisurely drive through the bogland areas surrounding the park, where the landscapes change dramatically with the season.
- **Where to Relax:** Stop by the Boora Café, a charming spot offering seasonal dishes and homemade treats to warm you up after your exploration.

3. Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula, County Louth

Carlingford is a medieval town brimming with history, stunning coastal views, and the scenic backdrop of the Cooley Mountains. The area is relatively quiet in autumn, making it ideal for a relaxed visit filled with rich history and vibrant fall scenery.

- **Hiking Trails:** The Slieve Foye Loop offers a mix of forest, mountain, and sea views. The trail is dotted with ancient ruins and boasts a beautiful display of autumn foliage.
- **Scenic Drive:** The coastal drive around the Cooley Peninsula is breathtaking in the fall, with stunning vistas of the Mourne Mountains and Carlingford Lough.
- **Where to Relax:** Visit PJ O'Hare's, one of Carlingford's oldest pubs, known for its friendly atmosphere, traditional music sessions, and seafood chowder.
- **Events:** Look out for the Carlingford Oyster Festival and other seasonal events celebrating the region's rich seafood heritage.

4. Birr, County Offaly

Birr is a charming heritage town known for its Georgian architecture and tranquil riverwalks. The town's highlight, Birr Castle Demesne, is a must-visit in the fall, with its extensive gardens and arboretum showcasing an impressive display of autumn foliage.

- **Hiking Trails:** Wander through the castle grounds, where you can explore winding pathways, admire rare tree species, and catch a glimpse of Ireland's largest treehouse.
- **Scenic Drive:** Explore the Slieve Bloom Mountains nearby, which offer quiet roads with magnificent views of colourful forests and rolling hills.
- **Where to Relax:** The Thatch, an authentic Irish pub

with a thatched roof, is a local favourite known for its cozy fireplace and excellent whiskey selection.

5. Gleniff Horseshoe Drive, County Sligo

For a truly unique autumn drive, head to the Gleniff Horseshoe, a stunning loop road surrounded by towering cliffs and lush valleys. This scenic drive offers a dramatic setting that's enhanced by the rich hues of autumn, creating a mystical atmosphere that's hard to find elsewhere.

- **Hiking Trails:** While the drive itself is the main attraction, the short walk to the old schoolhouse ruins offers an intimate look at the landscape's rugged beauty.
- **Where to Relax:** Stop by Harrison's Bar & Restaurant in nearby Ballintra, known for its hearty stews and traditional ambiance.
- **Events:** Keep an eye out for local markets and music nights in the surrounding villages, which provide a taste of the vibrant community spirit of the area.

Tips for Enjoying Ireland's Autumn Landscapes

- **Best Time to Visit:** The peak of autumn colours typically occurs from late September to early November. Plan your visit during midweek to avoid the weekend crowds and enjoy a more peaceful experience.
- **What to Bring:** Dress in layers to adapt to Ireland's unpredictable weather. Don't forget sturdy hiking boots, a rain jacket, and a camera to capture the stunning scenery.
- **Respect Nature:** Stick to marked trails, leave no trace, and support local businesses by dining and shopping locally during your travels.

Ireland's autumn is a season of stunning beauty, and these off-the-beaten-path destinations offer a chance to experience it in all its glory. Whether you're hiking through vibrant woodlands, driving along dramatic coastlines, or relaxing in a cozy pub, these hidden gems are sure to make your autumn adventure unforgettable.

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EXPLORING IRELAND'S FOOD SCENE :

The Rise of Artisan Producers and Farmers' Markets



Ireland's food scene is undergoing a remarkable transformation.

With a renewed focus on local, artisanal, and organic produce, the country is embracing a food renaissance that celebrates its rich heritage, innovative spirit, and the natural bounty of its landscapes. From bustling farmers' markets to independent food producers crafting unique products, Ireland's culinary landscape is flourishing like never before. In this article, we delve into the vibrant world of artisan food in Ireland, highlighting some of the best farmers' markets, local producers, and hidden culinary gems that are redefining Irish food culture.

The Artisan Revival: A Taste of Ireland's Heritage

Ireland's artisan food movement is more than just a trend; it's a return to traditional methods of farming, cooking, and producing food with an emphasis on quality, sustainability, and community. Artisans across the country are crafting everything from award-winning cheeses and charcuterie to organic vegetables, handmade chocolates, and craft beers. This movement champions small-scale, independent producers who are passionate about their craft and committed to using the finest local ingredients.

1. Meet the Makers: Profiles of Local Artisan Food Producers

Sheridan's Cheesemongers, Co. Meath: A staple in Ireland's artisan cheese scene, Sheridan's is renowned for sourcing and maturing the best farmhouse cheeses from across Ireland and Europe. Their commitment to quality and tradition has made them a favourite among cheese enthusiasts and top chefs alike.

Ballymakenny Farm, Co. Louth: Run by Maria and David Flynn, Ballymakenny Farm is known for its specialty potatoes, including the striking pink Violetta variety. Their passion for unique and heirloom

varieties has helped them carve out a niche in the Irish food scene, supplying some of the country's top restaurants.

Gubbeen Farmhouse Products, Co. Cork: Gubbeen is a family-run farm that produces award-winning cheeses, cured meats, and smoked fish using traditional methods. The family's commitment to sustainable farming and animal welfare is evident in the quality of their products, which have become a hallmark of Irish artisanal excellence.

2. Farmers' Markets: The Heartbeat of Local Food Culture

Farmers' markets are at the core of Ireland's food renaissance, offering a vibrant space where producers and consumers can connect directly. These markets are not just places to buy fresh, local produce; they are hubs of community, where food lovers can discover new flavours, meet the makers, and support local economies. Here are some of the best farmers' markets to explore:

English Market, Cork City: One of Ireland's oldest and most famous markets, the English Market is a treasure trove of local produce, artisanal foods, and specialty ingredients. From fresh seafood and traditional Irish meats to gourmet pastries and exotic spices, this bustling market has something for every palate.

St. George's Market, Belfast: St. George's Market is a vibrant blend of history, culture, and gastronomy. Operating since the 1600s, it offers a wide array of local and international foods, arts, and crafts. Highlights include freshly baked breads, locally sourced meats, and artisanal cheeses.

Temple Bar Food Market, Dublin: Nestled in the heart of Dublin's cultural quarter, the Temple Bar Food Market is a weekend hotspot for foodies. Featuring a diverse range of stalls selling everything from organic vegetables and fresh fish to handcrafted chocolates and artisan coffee, it's the perfect place to experience the best of Irish

food.

Milk Market, Limerick: Open every Saturday, the Milk Market is one of the oldest markets in Ireland, offering a mix of traditional and contemporary food stalls. Local farmers, bakers, and cheesemakers showcase their wares, making it a must-visit for those seeking fresh, quality produce.

3. Seasonal Recipes: Cooking with Local Ingredients

Embracing Ireland's artisan food scene means making the most of fresh, seasonal ingredients. Here are some simple, delicious recipes that celebrate the flavours of Irish produce:

Heirloom Tomato and Burrata Salad: Using juicy heirloom tomatoes from local growers and creamy burrata from Irish cheesemakers, this salad is a perfect summer dish that highlights the freshness of Ireland's produce. Drizzle with olive oil, sea salt, and fresh basil for a simple yet elegant meal.

Irish Lamb Stew with Root Vegetables: This traditional dish is elevated with locally sourced lamb and seasonal root vegetables like carrots, parsnips, and potatoes. Slow cooked with herbs and a splash of Guinness, it's the ultimate comfort food for colder months.

Rhubarb and Apple Crumble: For a sweet treat, this crumble combines tart rhubarb and sweet apples, both abundant in Ireland's autumn harvest. Top with oats and brown sugar for a classic dessert that's best served warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

4. Food Festivals: Celebrating Ireland's Culinary Heritage

Ireland's food festivals are the perfect places to experience the country's culinary creativity. These events celebrate everything from

seafood and whiskey to chocolate and street food, showcasing the best local producers and chefs.

Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival: One of the world's oldest oyster festivals, this event celebrates Galway's rich seafood heritage with oyster shucking competitions, seafood trails, and gourmet tastings.

Taste of Dublin: Held in the beautiful Iveagh Gardens, Taste of Dublin brings together the city's top chefs, restaurants, and food producers for a four-day celebration of Irish cuisine. Expect cooking demos, interactive workshops, and plenty of opportunities to sample delicious dishes.

Burren Slow Food Festival, Co. Clare: This festival highlights the unique food culture of the Burren region, with a focus on sustainable, slow food principles. It's a fantastic opportunity to learn from local producers, enjoy food tastings, and participate in farm tours.

Final Thoughts

Ireland's food scene is in the midst of an exciting evolution, driven by a passion for local, sustainable, and high-quality produce. From the hands of skilled artisans to the stalls of vibrant farmers' markets, there's never been a better time to explore the country's rich culinary landscape. Whether you're a seasoned foodie or just beginning your journey into Irish cuisine, supporting local producers and embracing seasonal ingredients is a delicious way to connect with the heart of Ireland's food culture.

For more information on Ireland's farmers' markets, artisan producers, and upcoming food festivals, visit Discover Ireland and start planning your culinary adventure today.



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WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?



Cyberbullying is the use of digital technologies, such as social media, messaging platforms, emails, and websites, to harass, threaten, or target someone in a harmful or aggressive manner.

It can take many forms, including spreading false rumours, sending hurtful messages, sharing private information without consent, impersonating someone to embarrass them, and creating or sharing mean or humiliating content about the person.

Key characteristics of cyberbullying include:

1. Anonymity: The bully may hide their identity, making it difficult to hold them accountable.
2. Persistence: Online content can be shared and viewed repeatedly, extending the duration of the bullying.
3. Publicity: Harmful messages or images can be seen by a wide audience, amplifying the impact.
4. Inescapability: The target can be reached at any time, making it hard to find a safe space away from the harassment.

Cyberbullying can lead to serious emotional and psychological consequences for the victim, including anxiety, depression, and in severe cases, self-harm.

Cyberbullying is on the rise in Ireland, particularly among young people. Several factors contribute to this increase, including the growing use of smartphones, social media platforms, and other digital technologies. Here are some key points highlighting the situation:

1. Increased Screen Time: More children and teenagers are spending significant time online, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased digital engagement due to remote learning and social isolation.
2. Social Media Influence: Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp are commonly used by young people in Ireland, making them vulnerable to online harassment, trolling, and other forms of cyberbullying.
3. Lack of Awareness and Digital Literacy: Many young people and even some adults may not fully understand the impact of their online behaviour or the tools available to protect themselves, such as privacy settings and reporting mechanisms.
4. High-Profile Cases and Surveys: Studies and reports by organizations like CyberSafeKids and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) have highlighted the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying. For example, surveys have shown that a significant number of children in Ireland have experienced some form of cyberbullying.
5. Government and School Responses: In response to the rise, there have been increased efforts by schools, the government, and

non-profits to educate students and parents about the dangers of cyberbullying, digital safety, and mental health support.

6. Legislative Actions: The implementation of laws like the Harassment, Harmful Communications, and Related Offences Act 2020 (commonly known as Coco's Law) reflects the seriousness of cyberbullying in Ireland. This law makes online harassment and sharing of intimate images without consent criminal offenses.

While there is growing awareness and action being taken, cyberbullying remains a significant and evolving issue in Ireland, requiring ongoing efforts in education, legislation, and support for those affected.

An advertisement for Mattress Mick's. At the top, a banner lists mattress types: 'POCKET SPRING • ORTHOPAEDIC • COIL SPRUNG • MEMORY FOAM'. Below this, a woman in a red jacket is lying on a mattress, smiling. A circular logo says 'MADE IN IRELAND 100% IRISH MADE MATTRESSES'. The main text reads: 'NEED A MATTRESS NEED ONE QUICK, GET ONE NOW FROM Mattress Mick's'. Below that, it says 'The Mattress Price Fighter' and 'IRELAND'S GREATEST MATTRESS SALESMAN!'. The address is 'COOLOCK, UNIT 3 MALAHIDE ROAD INDUSTRIAL PARK, D17 AX71'. At the bottom, it says 'BUY ONLINE OR IN-STORE!' and 'www.mattressmick.ie' with social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.



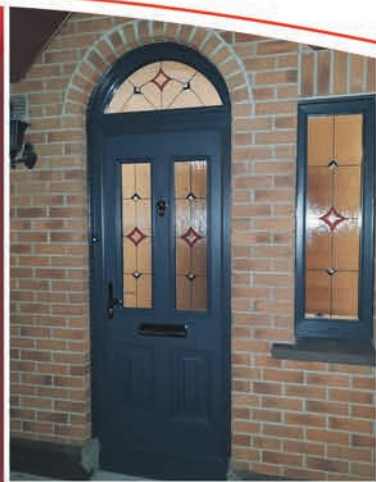
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- Pre-University Animal Science
- Pre-University Physiotherapy
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THE APOPHIS ASTEROID

By Philip Walshe

Friday 13th April

That's the date. The year? 2029.

On that date a rock will shoot past the Earth, about 30,500 kilometres (19,000 miles) overhead.

Some navigation satellites are higher than that. The Moon is about 384,000 (239,000 miles) away.

So, Do I need to pack my bags and head for the hills?

No, Scientists say they are virtually certain, (and they are rarely that certain about anything!), that it will not hit us.

What is it?

It is an asteroid, named Apophis, (after a classical Egyptian god). It's hard to be certain about some other details, but scientists can make educated guesses. It is probably made from rock and metal. It probably came from the Asteroid belt, which lies between Mars and Jupiter. (It is there partly because of the enormous pull of Jupiter's gravity, which prevented a planet from forming).

Is it the only rock to fly by?

No, many, many rocks, dust and debris pass by, and some enter our atmosphere, every day. It is hard to be sure, but some believe many tons of the stuff fall to Earth each year.

Are there other belts?

Yes. There is another belt, called the Kuiper belt, beyond Neptune. It was named after Gerard Kuiper in 1951, and is made of icy bodies, dwarf planets, (including Pluto), and comets.

What is the Oort Cloud?

This is a vast region of icy bodies that is thought to completely surround the solar system. In the 1950's, Jan Oort, a Dutch astronomer, suggested such a body exists, but it is so far away that scientists have still not confirmed it even exists.

It is thought Halley's comet comes from here. This was recorded by the Chinese in 240 BCE, (and possibly by the Greeks before that), and has featured in historical records many times since, (including 1066, when the Normans conquered Britain). The comet visits us every 75-76 years, but it won't be back again until 2061, so no need to rush out to buy a telescope just yet!

Friday 13th April 2029

Superstitious or not, scientists are eagerly awaiting the near-Earth flyby of the asteroid. It should provide lots of useful information. It will be moving at a lightning speed of many kilometres per second, (much faster than a speeding bullet!), so only telescopes, costing millions, will be able to record it.

Would you like to know more?

Astronomy is a fascinating subject and, if you want to know more, why not come along to a Wednesday evening class in the Castleknock Community Centre? Full details are available at www.castleknockcc.ie if you want to know more about the Apophis asteroid, check out the excellent NASA link 99942 Apophis (2004 MN4) (nasa.gov)



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Councillor Tania Doyle (Ind) expresses continued concern regarding noise levels on the N3

As we see increased development along the N3 spine it is a consequence that traffic levels shall rise accordingly.



Mile for mile, the N3 from Clonee to M50 is one of the most heavily used and congested sections of carriageway in the country. Trees and hedgerow are universally recognised as a significant mitigator of noise and air pollution. Hard infrastructure sound barriers are another key component along with reductions in speed and high-quality road surfaces. The N3 (J4 Clonee) to M50 is earmarked for upgrade but the rollout of this program must see progression so tangible improvements can be felt by the residents of estates within the Littlepace/Castaheany Residential development.

Noise measurement must establish exposure over a wider area. From officials I understand a disagreement exists on the responsibility for noise mitigation from the TII-managed road network which

includes the N3. Should there be a scheme proposed to mitigate noise at this location or indeed along the whole of the N3, I have written to TII calling for it to undertake more refined modelling and verification through measurement. Should the N3 upgrade scheme proceed an Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed noise measurements must take place.

Currently there is no commitment from TII to undertake any noise mitigation scheme and therefore they believe there would be little benefit in incurring the cost of noise measurement. I am not convinced cost should dictate policy.

I requested additional surveys to be undertaken to ascertain noise levels. It is my intention to continue to lobby for increased noise mitigation on N3

A campaign graphic for Councillor Tania Doyle. It features a purple and orange color scheme. On the right is a circular portrait of Tania Doyle, a woman with short reddish hair, smiling. On the left, text is arranged in a white and purple background. The text reads: "Thank You for placing your trust in me so I can continue to work for OUR community!" followed by "Councillor Tania DOYLE" and "YOUR Number 1 Choice for Ongar LEA".

Thank You
for placing your trust in
me so I can continue to
work for **OUR**
community!

Councillor Tania
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Over 23,000 Arrests for Drug Offences in Dublin West in past Decade



Tens of thousands of people have been arrested for Drug offences in West Dublin over the past decade.

Figures released to Aontú by the Minister for Justice show that 23,570 people were arrested with the number of arrests peaking in 2021 and 2022 and arrests on an upward trajectory between the years 2019 to 2023.

Aontú Cllr Ellen Troy ,who sits on the Blanchardstown Drugs and Alcohol Task Force says the figures are ‘shocking’ and a ‘wakeup call’ to the Government to “get a handle on the scourge of drugs in West Dublin for once and for all”.

She says:

“There is hardly an area of Dublin West that is untouched by drugs. The ease with which people of all ages and of all backgrounds can access them is frightening and the knock-on ramifications are huge. Crime, serious addiction, family breakdown, desolation and desperation are their hallmarks, and they leave indelible marks on their users”.

“Falling Garda numbers are really disturbing in the light of this. The Department of Justice has confirmed to Aontú party leader, Deputy Peadar Tóibín that record numbers of Gardai left the force last year .100 were recruited but shockingly 488 resigned or retired. In the years 2021 to 2023, 32% of Gardai left and were not replaced. This

is a pattern; for every year that Fine Gael has been in government the number of Gardaí has fallen, morale is at an all-time low and shows no sign of improving”.

“Our naval fleet has been decimated by this and successive Governments and it is well known that we are seen as a soft touch by the drug lords who ply their trade up and down our shores”.

“The massive increase in drugs being channeled from Irish waters into mainland Europe once again shows up the vulnerability of our coastline due to the gutting of our Naval service”.

“Our rugged, and in many ways isolated coastline is a highly attractive gateway to the European Continent”.

“Why are so many Naval boats in Ireland tied up--we spent millions buying two more from New Zealand in the past couple of years, just to bring them in and tie them up to our ports and pier walls as we cannot find the resources to employ enough Naval staff to put them to sea”.

“Can you imagine how the drug lords in Europe and beyond must see us; this is absolute madness, they are laughing at us and laughing all the way to the bank and on the backs of people to whom they ply their disgusting trade”. “A depleted Naval service and a depleted Garda Force, it’s truly a perfect storm.”

LORNA NOLAN

Profile of a Tireless Community Activist

Nolan was elected to Fingal County Council as an Independent candidate in 2014. Throughout her tenure she was involved in many community projects, particularly those pertaining to those suffering from poverty, mental health and addiction.

The loss of her seat has not slowed her down one iota. She is now involved with Fianna Fail in the Mulhuddart area and elsewhere in the county.

This reporter has witnessed Nolan's tireless efforts first hand. Spending a couple of hours with her, I witnessed her delivering food parcels to local rehabilitation centres, local community projects and to members of the Traveller Community.

The parcels given to those members of the Traveller Community contained essential items for the care of children such as baby food and nappies. Also contained in these parcels were food enough to feed each family. This food Nolan sources herself. She works alongside various Blanchardstown Traveller Development Groups that have established a track record in innovative and ground-breaking work using a collective community development approach to addressing Traveller & Roma issues and promoting Traveller & Roma human rights.

Along with the food donations to these various rehabilitation centres, she also provides help with housing, reintroduction into the community and aftercare support.

Another group she is involved with is a community based rehabilitation programme that delivers evidence based treatments through a warm and friendly environment.

The purpose is to provide the clients with opportunities to focus on their chosen path of recovery, as well as motivating them to continue their recovery journey. They try their best to provide enough support to the clients so that they can maintain a drug free life and find employment opportunities.

She is also involved with various voluntary groups dedicated to reducing suicides, supporting suicidal people and bereaved families and friends.



Throughout the time spent shadowing Nolan to numerous community projects and day programs for those fighting addiction, she was constantly taking calls from various people in need of help.

She also does great work with elderly people, whether it is providing parcels with essentials and helping to ensure that they have adequate housing.

Nolan's Achilles Heel is self promotion, she does this work quietly without looking for photo ops and kudos.

The Impact of New Rental Legislation in Ireland: WHAT TENANTS AND LANDLORDS NEED TO KNOW



Ireland's rental market has been a hot topic in recent years, marked by rising rents, housing shortages, and increasing pressure on both tenants and landlords.

To address these issues, the government has introduced several legislative changes aimed at providing greater protection for tenants while balancing the interests of landlords. This article dives into the latest updates in Ireland's rental market, exploring the new laws, their implications, and practical advice for navigating the evolving landscape.

Key Legislative Changes: What's New?

Several new laws and amendments have been introduced in recent years to address the challenges in the rental market. Here are some of the most significant changes:

1. Rent Caps and Rent Pressure Zones (RPZs)

The government has continued to enforce and expand Rent Pressure Zones (RPZs), areas where rent increases are capped to a maximum of 2% per annum or in line with inflation, whichever is lower. RPZs are designed to prevent sudden and excessive rent hikes in high-demand areas.

- **Pros:** Tenants in RPZs are offered more stability and predictability in rent, helping to protect them from drastic increases that can make living unaffordable.

- **Cons:** Landlords argue that the rent caps can discourage investment in rental properties, leading to fewer homes available for rent in the long term.

2. Extended Notice Periods for Tenants

Recent changes have extended the notice periods that landlords must give tenants when ending a tenancy. For tenancies over six months, notice periods now range from 90 days to 224 days, depending on the length of the tenancy.

- **Pros:** This provides tenants with more time to secure alternative accommodation, particularly in a tight rental market where finding a new home can be challenging.

- **Cons:** Landlords feel that extended notice periods reduce their flexibility, particularly when dealing with non-paying tenants or those breaching lease terms.

3. Ban on "No-Fault" Evictions During Winter

A temporary ban on evictions during winter months was introduced as an emergency measure to prevent homelessness during the colder season. This policy was a response to rising eviction rates and the increasing

number of families at risk of losing their homes.

- **Pros:** Provides critical protection for vulnerable tenants during a period when finding new accommodation is most difficult.

- **Cons:** Critics argue that it places undue pressure on landlords, who may face extended periods without rent while still being responsible for property maintenance.

4. Enhanced Tenant Protections for Rental Arrears

Legislation has strengthened tenant protections when it comes to rental arrears. Landlords are now required to engage with tenants who fall behind on rent payments, including offering payment plans before eviction proceedings can commence.

- **Pros:** Provides tenants with a safety net and encourages dialogue between tenants and landlords to resolve issues before eviction.

- **Cons:** Landlords express concerns that this process can be lengthy and financially burdensome, especially if the tenant fails to adhere to payment plans.

Expert Insights: Balancing the Interests of Tenants and Landlords

To provide a balanced view, we spoke with both tenants, landlords, and legal experts to understand the impact of these changes from both sides.

Q&A with Housing Expert Sarah Collins

Q: How do these new laws impact tenants positively?

Sarah Collins: "The extended notice periods and rent caps offer tenants much-needed stability. In a market where housing availability is scarce, these measures can prevent tenants from facing sudden homelessness or rent increases they cannot afford. The legislation also provides more security for tenants facing financial difficulties, allowing them to engage with landlords constructively."

Q: What are the main challenges for landlords under the new regulations?

Sarah Collins: "For landlords, the extended notice periods and rent caps can feel restrictive, particularly when dealing with problematic tenancies. The increased administrative burden and the fear of losing control over their properties have discouraged some landlords from staying in the market, exacerbating the housing shortage."

Q: What advice would you give to landlords navigating these changes?

Sarah Collins: "Landlords should stay informed about their rights and responsibilities. Engaging with tenants early to address any issues, maintaining open communication, and using mediation services can help resolve conflicts before they escalate to legal proceedings."

Real Stories: Voices from the Rental Market

Tenant Perspective: Liam's Experience in Dublin

Liam, a tenant in Dublin, shared his thoughts on the

impact of rent caps: "Knowing my rent won't skyrocket suddenly gives me peace of mind. However, finding a place in the first place was a nightmare. The competition is fierce, and landlords seem hesitant to rent due to the regulations."

Landlord Perspective: Fiona's Challenges in Cork

Fiona, a landlord in Cork, expressed her concerns: "I've always been a fair landlord, but these new rules make it difficult. The extended notice periods mean I'm stuck if a tenant stops paying. I understand the need for protection, but there should also be support for landlords who depend on rental income."

Navigating the Changes: Tips for Tenants and Landlords

For Tenants:

- **Know Your Rights:** Familiarize yourself with the latest tenant protections and RPZ rules. The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) website is an excellent resource for up-to-date information.

- **Communicate Early:** If you're facing financial difficulties, engage with your landlord as early as possible to discuss payment plans or other arrangements.

- **Document Everything:** Keep records of all communications with your landlord, including payment receipts and written agreements, to protect yourself in case of disputes.

For Landlords:

- **Stay Informed:** Keep up with legislative changes by following updates from the RTB and attending landlord information sessions.

- **Engage with Tenants Proactively:** Address issues early to avoid escalation. Consider mediation services if disputes arise.

- **Consider Professional Management:** If the administrative burden becomes too much, hiring a property management company can help navigate complex regulations and tenant relations.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Ireland's Rental Market

While the new legislation aims to strike a balance between tenant protections and landlord rights, the effectiveness of these measures will depend on their implementation and ongoing review. Both tenants and landlords are encouraged to engage with the RTB and local housing bodies to stay informed and access support when needed. As the housing crisis continues, the government's approach may evolve, with further legislative adjustments likely to address emerging challenges.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a more stable and fair rental market for all parties involved. By understanding the latest changes and knowing how to navigate the evolving landscape, tenants and landlords can better protect their interests and contribute to a more balanced rental sector in Ireland.



SENATOR **Emer CURRIE**

ACTION PLAN

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

CHILDCARE PLACES



Work Equal Childcare Campaign

Supporting Families

Progress has been made in childcare in recent years, most notably in affordability for parents and a significant increase in state funding to €1 billion per annum.

In September 2024 childcare fees are due to be cut by a further twenty-five percent for provider-based, registered care, making a big difference to household budgets.

Supporting Local Providers

I am working with several of our invaluable local providers to address the challenges they currently face, including rising costs, onerous administration, and recruitment and retention of staff. I want to ensure the new Core Funding model works for all types of childcare services.

Supporting Childminding

Childminders provide an essential service to families, especially enabling women to return to work. It is right that childminding takes its proper place in the sector, including basic regulations and the extension of subsidies to parents. I am working with childminders and colleagues in Government to make this happen.

Supporting After School Care

We need more After School Care in Dublin West. The Minister for Education recently launched new guidelines to encourage the use of school buildings outside school hours. However, I believe the government must go further to activate local buildings for childcare purposes, including through legislation.



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Delivering Childcare Places

Fine Gael Leader an Taoiseach Simon Harris TD has endorsed recommendations from my report 'Better Planning for Local Childcare' on how we can deliver the childcare places we need in local communities. These recommendations are now included in our Party Manifesto.

The Government has also committed to examine a new state model for the provision of childcare places I have proposed. It involves the building and acquisition of childcare facilities in residential developments at a reduced cost, that can then be leased back to childcare providers at a reasonable cost. This opens the door to state-led public provision of childcare, as well as supporting local providers and community partnerships.

My report identifies the gaps and flaws in the planning system which lead to a consistent undersupply of childcare places. 4,000 new homes have been built in Dublin West in the last 5 years without enough access to childcare. In some cases, childcare facilities included in planning haven't been built or lie vacant for years.

Since starting this work, two creches at Phoenix Park Racecourse and Rathborne Park in Ashtown, vacant since 2019, are now due to open later this year.

Other recommendations include:

- ✔ A forward planning system for childcare linked to the delivery of childcare places in local communities.
- ✔ Planning laws and guidelines that ensure the provision of state-of-the-art childcare facilities matches new housing supply.
- ✔ New laws to compel developers to make empty childcare and community buildings available for childcare purposes.
- ✔ All new sites for primary and post-primary schools to include co-location of childcare facilities.



SENATOR
Emer CURRIE
Getting things done



NAVIGATING IRELAND'S COST OF LIVING CRISIS: Practical Tips to Save on Daily Expenses



Ireland's cost of living crisis has become a significant concern for many households, as rising prices for groceries, energy, rent, and other essentials put increasing pressure on family budgets.

With inflation impacting almost every aspect of daily life, many people are looking for practical ways to cut costs and manage their finances more effectively. This article provides expert tips, community resources, and real-life stories to help you navigate these challenging times.

1. Budgeting Basics: Taking Control of Your Finances

Creating a clear and realistic budget is the first step to managing your money more effectively. By tracking your income and expenses, you can identify areas where you might be overspending and make informed decisions on where to cut back.

Set Up a Budget Tracker: Use apps like YNAB (You Need a Budget), PocketGuard, or even a simple Excel spreadsheet to monitor your spending. Break down your expenses into categories (e.g., groceries, utilities, transport) and set limits for each.

Review Subscriptions and Memberships: Cancel any subscriptions you no longer use, like streaming services or gym memberships. Consider switching to free alternatives or

shared family plans where possible.

Expert Tip: According to financial advisor David O'Connell, it's important to review your budget monthly. "Adjusting your budget frequently helps you stay on track, especially with fluctuating energy and grocery costs."

2. Grocery Savings: Smart Shopping Strategies

With food prices steadily climbing, grocery shopping has become a major expense for many households. However, with a few smart strategies, you can reduce your grocery bill without compromising on quality.

Shop Own-Brand Products: Many supermarket own-brand products are just as good as their branded counterparts but come at a fraction of the cost. Stores like Aldi and Lidl often offer great value for money.

Plan Your Meals: Planning your weekly meals in advance can help reduce impulse buys and food waste. Stick to a shopping list based on your meal plan to avoid unnecessary purchases.

Use Loyalty Programs and Apps: Take advantage of supermarket loyalty cards and apps, such as Tesco Clubcard, SuperValu Real Rewards, or the Dunnes Stores app, to earn

points and access exclusive discounts.

Community Insight: Mary, a mother of two from Cork, shares her approach: "I've started using food-sharing apps like OLIO, where locals can give away surplus food for free. It's a great way to save and reduce food waste."

3. Energy-Saving Tips: Cutting Down on Utility Bills

With energy prices hitting record highs, managing household energy consumption is crucial. Making a few adjustments to your daily habits can lead to significant savings on your utility bills.

Switch Energy Providers: Use comparison websites like Switcher.ie or Bonkers.ie to find better deals on electricity and gas. Switching providers can save you hundreds of euros a year.

Use Energy-Efficient Appliances: Invest in energy-efficient bulbs, appliances, and smart plugs that reduce electricity usage. Unplug devices when not in use to avoid phantom power consumption.

Adjust Your Heating Habits: Lowering your thermostat by just 1°C can reduce your heating bill by up to 10%. Use programmable thermostats to heat your home only when necessary.

Expert Tip: Energy consultant Elaine Donnelly recommends draught-proofing doors and windows. "Simple measures like using draught excluders and sealing gaps can keep the warmth in and reduce your heating costs."

4. Housing and Rent: Exploring Cost-Effective Options

Rising rents have made finding affordable housing a challenge for many, particularly in urban areas. However, there are steps you can take to alleviate some of the pressure.

Rent a Room Scheme: Homeowners can earn up to €14,000 per year tax-free by renting out a spare room under the Rent a Room Relief scheme. If you're renting, consider subletting a room to split costs (with your landlord's permission).

Negotiate Your Rent: If your lease is up for renewal, don't hesitate to negotiate with your landlord, especially if you've been a reliable tenant. Highlighting your good track record could help you secure a better rate.

Shared Housing: Co-living spaces or shared housing can significantly reduce your rent expenses. Websites like Daft.ie and Rent.ie offer listings for shared accommodations.

5. Transport Savings: Getting Around for Less

Transport costs can add up, particularly if you rely on a car for commuting. Exploring alternative travel options and making small adjustments can help you save significantly.

Public Transport Discounts: The Young Adult Leap Card (available for ages 19-23) offers up to 50% off public transport fares. The TaxSaver scheme allows commuters to save on bus, train, and Luas fares through their employers.

Carpooling and Cycling: Consider carpooling with

colleagues or neighbours to share fuel costs. Cycling is another cost-effective and environmentally friendly way to get around, especially with new cycling infrastructure being developed in many cities.

Expert Tip: Transport expert Cian Mulligan suggests planning your travel routes using the TFI (Transport for Ireland) journey planner to find the most cost-effective and efficient options.

6. Community Resources: Tap into Local Support

Communities across Ireland offer resources to help residents cope with the cost-of-living crisis. From food banks to community gardens, these local supports can provide relief when budgets are tight.

St. Vincent de Paul: This charity offers practical support, including food hampers, financial advice, and assistance with utility bills.

Community Food Banks: Local food banks provide essential groceries for those struggling to make ends meet. Many towns have pop-up food markets offering discounted fresh produce.

Government Supports: Check your eligibility for schemes such as the Fuel Allowance, Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, and the Household Benefits Package.

Adapting to the New Normal

The cost-of-living crisis in Ireland has forced many to rethink their spending habits and adapt to new financial realities. By taking proactive steps like budgeting carefully, seeking out discounts, and tapping into community resources, you can alleviate some of the financial strain and make your money go further.

While the situation is undoubtedly challenging, these practical tips can help you regain control over your finances and navigate these tough times with a little more ease.

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