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OCT/NOV 2023

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## EDITORIAL

**W**elcome to the Autumn edition of Little Village. As summer draws to a close we are all hoping for an easier winter for fuel costs. We include an article examining why fuel costs are still not coming down as expected.

We welcome local contributions about local news and events. If you want to inText and WhatsApp scams are on the increase. This month we highlight the 'Hi Mum / Dad' scam that has caught out many parents.

As always, we welcome contributions from individuals and organisations in the Lucan, Leixlip and Celbridge areas. Send them to [littlevillagenewsdesk@gmail.com](mailto:littlevillagenewsdesk@gmail.com)

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# HI MUM / DAD TEXT SCAM

A warning has been issued as hundreds continue to fall for the 'Hi Mum/Dad' text scam.



**B**ank of Ireland is urging the public to be wary of the 'Hi Mum/Dad' scam after a 25% rise in scam messages.

Scammers are pretending to be a person's child by sending 'Hi Mum/Dad' messages. They claim they're using a different phone after losing theirs.

They then ask the parent for money and request their card and bank details.

The increase in these scam messages may be because of the number of people on holiday. Parents will understandably fall for scam texts like this if their children are travelling as they are very convincing.

The public should look out for the following format: "Hi Mum/ Hi Dad, this is my temporary/ new number..."

The fraudster will then ask the parent to help them pay for something urgently. They will then tell them to send the money to a specific bank account or for their card details.

They may also ask for the money to be sent via Apple Pay or Google Pay.

Head of Fraud at BOI, Nicola Sadlier, said: "If a text prompts you to act immediately - stop, think, and check before reacting. Our advice to customers is, no matter what you're being told in a text, always call your son or daughter back on the number that you know."

"The sense of urgency in this current wave of text messages is deliberately designed to cause panic.

"This means customers are unfortunately acting on the request before considering a rational response.

"If a text prompts you to act immediately – stop, think and check before reacting. Our advice to customers is no matter what you're being told in a text, always call your son or daughter back on the number that you know."

If you get a suspicious message, then email a screenshot of the message to your banks security department.

You should then delete the text message.

If you have fallen for a scam message then you can call Bank of Ireland's 24/7 Freephone line 1800 946 764 or your own bank if different.

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# 9 ways to make Halloween special for little ones

Some great ideas for a safe Halloween from Penguin.



**H**ave some frightfully good fun this Halloween! From getting dressed up and decorating your home to reading cosy stories together, here's how you can celebrate the spookiest night of the year.

## 1. Cook up some treats together

Sweet treats are one of the best parts of Halloween. But instead of heading to the supermarket and picking up what's on offer, you and your tot could make some treats together.

Encourage them to use their imagination to think of some fun things to bake; you could try skeleton-shaped cookies, some spooky ghost cupcakes or tasty pumpkin pies – the possibilities are endless!

## 2. Get all dressed up

Children love to get dressed up, and Halloween is the perfect occasion. Of course, you don't have to dress up as something big and scary to get into the Halloween spirit – try a well-loved book character such as Peppa Pig or Hey Duggee with the fun, step-by-step tutorials linked here. You could then all have a Halloween parade around the living room or host a 'best costume' competition to ramp up the excitement (though it might be wise to make everyone a winner to avoid any tears or arguments).

## 3. Decorate your home

What could be more fun for kids than turning your own home into a haunted house? Put them in charge of making and choosing where to put all the decorations – they can have a go at making these spooky spiders. See <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/childrens-article/make-your-own-spooky-spider-with-pepp>. Kids will love getting involved and will squeal with delight (or should that be with fright?) when they see the finished result.

## 4. Carve your own jack-o-lantern

Get ready to dig out your carving tools. Little boils and ghouls will find pumpkin carving frightfully fun, and it's an activity you can still enjoy in lockdown. If you want to be creative and avoid the standard triangle eyes and zig-zag grin, there are lots of inspirational stencils you can find online. As a safe alternative for the really little ones, have a go at painting your pumpkins instead.

## 5. Read some not-so-scary stories together

Halloween is the perfect time to settle down, get cosy and read some books together, especially as it's beginning to get darker and

colder. To make it extra special, find a comfy spot or set up your own reading nook, grab some yummy treats and a warm drink, and of course, some spooktacular books. These not-too-scary tales will get children into the spirit.

## 6. Try the mystery Halloween box game

This sensory game will definitely make your little monster squeal. Put different textured foods into a bowl or box, blindfold your child and then ask them to tell you what they can feel. Children will have lots of fun trying to guess, and you can reward correct answers with a sweet or two. As for the fillings in these mystery boxes, leftover pumpkin flesh, peeled grapes, dried pasta and gummy wriggly worms are just some of the gruesome things you could use.

## 7. Plan a Halloween treasure hunt

If you don't plan on going trick-or-treating this year, why not create a thrilling treasure hunt for your little one? Draw up a map and leave clues (alongside some sweet treats) for them to find. For those with a garden, take the treasure hunt outside and conduct it by torchlight.

## 8. Enjoy a not-so-spooky film night

And last, but certainly not least, once all the Halloween activities are over for the day you can all gather together on the sofa and settle down for a film night. Some of our film recommendations that the whole family will enjoy include *Casper* (1995), *The Little Vampire* (2000), *Hotel Transylvania* (2012), *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989) and *Monsters, Inc.* (2001).

## 9. Do some Halloween colouring in and activities

You can't go wrong with some colouring and activity sheets. Aspiring little witches and wizards can try these Peppa Pig activity sheets.

Download them here <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/childrens-article/peppa-halloween-activity-sheets>



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# Kildare County Council Carrying out Septic Tank Inspections

Under the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS), produced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Kildare County Council must carry out a prescribed number of DWWTS inspections each year.



**T**he inspections for 2023, which protect human health and water quality from the risks posed by DWWTS, are currently underway across the county. Homeowners will receive prior notification if their DWWTS has been chosen for an inspection.

The inspections, which are carried out by Kildare County Council's Environment Section, are visual and non-intrusive. Kildare County Council is encouraging homeowners to familiarise themselves with the location of their DWWTS and all associated pipework. Homeowners are also advised to look out for signs of a poorly maintained system such as excessive sludge, slow draining toilets and sinks, foul odours, ponding of effluent or contaminated effluent entering drains and ditches.

If a DWWTS fails an inspection there may be a grant available to aid an upgrade.

There 14,962 registered DWWTS in Kildare and many more that are currently unregistered. DWWTS include all septic tanks, wastewater tanks and treatment systems receiving, storing, treating or disposing of domestic wastewater. It also includes all fittings and percolation areas associated with such tanks and systems and

drains used to discharge wastewater from a premises, whether or not a receiving tank is present.

DWWTS should be serviced and de-sludged on a regular basis by an authorised waste contractor and receipts should be kept and produced during the inspection.

For more information on how to maintain your DWWTS and for a list of septic tank sludge collectors in Kildare visit <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Environment/WasteWater/>

All DWWTS are required to be registered, this includes properties which are let and all types of residential premises including buildings, caravans, mobile homes and any other structures served by a DWWTS.

The register is maintained by 'Protect Our Water' who will issue owners with a Certificate of Registration. The fee for registration is set at €50. For further information visit - <https://www.protectourwater.ie>

New-build properties must be registered within 90 days of connection to a DWWTS and change of ownership of existing houses must also be notified to 'Protect Our Water'. Failure to register by the prescribed date precludes owners from availing of a grant to upgrade a septic tank system.



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## Liona O'TOOLE

**Peace  
Commissioner**

**Independent  
Councillor  
for Lucan**



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#### Adamstown SDZ and delivery of Swimming Pool

As part of my work around everyday issues in Lucan, I identified a requirement for the Adamstown SDZ (Strategic Development Zone) and the Clonburris SDZ to be included in our Council schedule of meetings. I'm delighted to report that following my motions, we now have Quarterly SDZ meetings. This has allowed councillors to review and discuss progress on both Adamstown and Clonburris in greater detail. I've published updates on each meeting and brought issues identified by locals directly to planners on South Dublin County Council. At a recent SDZ meeting I was informed by the planners that they have submitted an application to An Bord Pleanála for proposed non-material amendments to the Adamstown SDZ Planning Scheme in accordance with Section 170A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Details of these amendments provided to me by senior council planners are as follows:

"To support the on-going delivery of the SDZ and to help council planners manage some of the issues that have arisen since the scheme was adopted, the Planning Authority are now seeking approval for non-material amendments from An Bord Pleanála to aid the delivery of the Planning Scheme and the final build out of Adamstown."

- "Minor amendment to the phasing requirement in relation to schools. The amendment provides flexibility to allow School Site 4 to be either a primary or a secondary school. Currently this is only permitted to be a primary school."
- "Minor text amendment to current Phase 7 phasing requirement for construction of a leisure centre with a swimming pool. In the context of the delivery of the Lucan pool in the area, the Planning Authority has proposed an amendment to this phasing requirement to broaden the scope of opportunities for community floorspace and/or community gain."
- "Minor text amendment to Quality Bus Corridors wording to reflect current status of National Transport Authority (NTA) guidance (National Cycle Manual) and Bus Connects."
- "Minor text amendment to wording related to the existing option in the Planning Scheme to provide residential units on the potential Fire Station site (In the event that Fire Station is progressed in Clonburris)."
- "Minor amendment to allow, provided sufficient justification and evidence is supplied, the consideration of timing of phasing requirement by the Planning Authority."
- "Minor amendment to enable transferring of residential units between neighbouring Development Areas."
- "Minor amendment to increase non-residential floorspace requirement in Adamstown Castle Development Area."

"Other minor amendments including updating references, summaries of policy and guidance, updating of typographical errors and other clarifications."

"It should be noted that no changes have been made to the overall unit numbers permissible or the overall phasing requirements set out in the Planning Scheme."

I have raised concerns in relation to some of these proposals in particular "construction of a leisure centre with a swimming pool". I believe that there is no 'equivalent' to swimming pool, a swimming pool is a unique community amenity that serves the whole community and people of all ages. To state that the Lucan pool has been built in the area and use this as a reason to amend the Adamstown policy is disappointing as it has taken myself, and others, nine years to get the pool in Lucan and the community of Lucan thirty years previously. I strongly believe that the Adamstown area needs a leisure centre with pool, it's a brand-new area with a projected population doubling the Lucan/Adamstown area. Most importantly the people of Adamstown were promised a 'Pool' as per the Adamstown SDZ plan and subsequently heavily advertised by developers.

South Dublin County Council planners refer to these as 'minor' amendments.

It's important for residents to be aware that if An Bord Pleanála rule these amendments as 'minor' they don't require public consultation. If they are deemed 'major' changes then they will go out for public consultation. The decision was due over the summer months however at time of print no decision has been made.

Please feel free to call me anytime if you have any queries on the above.

# IRISH DISHES – DUBLIN CODDLE

When did you last see Dublin Coddle on the menu?



**A** Dublin coddle is the beloved Irish take on a rich stew. The dish that we know today is clearly meat-heavy, a far cry from earlier versions that had just potatoes, vegetables, and pork scraps. Coddles can take many shapes because each cook can add whatever leftovers they have at hand, but in general, potatoes and other root vegetables, bacon, sausages, and onions make the base of this delicious preparation.

Usually served with bread, the coddle meal is so filling that there is no need to make other dishes to accompany it—just fresh soda bread slices, perfect to soak up the juices. Sometimes made with Guinness beer to add a deep earthy flavour and rich texture, but beef stock will do.

## What Does Coddle Mean?

Named from the French verb caudle, meaning to

gently boil, this recipe was originally invented as a resourceful way of feeding many when food scarcity was common. A gentle boil can be obtained either on the stove top over a low heat or in the oven. While some coddle recipes do not traditionally call for browning the ingredients before simmering, the slight browning helps build flavour to make for a tasty finished coddle.

## What's the Difference Between a Coddle and a Stew?

The primary difference is that a coddle is cooked in layers of vegetables, meat, and potatoes with just a small amount of liquid. A stew is much more like a thick soup with cubed meat, veggies, or both. Both are considered comfort foods and hearty one-pot meals.

## Type of Sausage to Use in Coddle



Any good quality Irish pork sausage will be the most authentic.

### Best Type of Potato to Use in Coddle

White potatoes are sturdy and won't break down even after long cooking times, retaining their shape in the finished dish.

If you don't mind the skin, you can scrub the potatoes and leave the skin on for a more rustic presentation. If you don't want to fuss with slicing the potatoes, you can also dice them into 2 inch squares and layer.

### Make Ahead

Coddle can be made ahead of time and then left in a slightly warmed oven until it's time to eat. Alternatively, you can make the coddle in advance, and once finished and reaches room temperature refrigerate it for up to 4 days. Simply reheat by adding a splash of stock over medium-low heat.

### Here is recipe for Dublin Coddle

Ingredients

- 900g potatoes, peeled and sliced into slices
- (approx thickness of euro coin)

- 500 ml chicken stock
- 450 g sausages, cut into large chunks
- 225g lean bacon or cooked ham cut into thick strips
- Large onion, peeled and thickly sliced
- 2 or 3 large carrots, peeled and sliced
- Salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley

### Method

#### • STEP 1

Brown the sausages and bacon in a frying pan for a few minutes. Place half the sausages and bacon in the bottom of a large, oven proof casserole

#### • STEP 2

Add half the onions, potatoes, carrots, salt, pepper and parsley . Add another layer of meat and vegetables, season to taste

#### • STEP 3

Cover with a lid and cook in a slow oven (180 degrees, gas mark 3) for about 2 hours

#### • STEP 4

Remove the lid for the last 30 minutes and dot the top layer with butter (this allows the top layer to colour and crisp up)

# Wordsearch

(Answers on Next Page)

MURPHY  
HINDS  
FRICKER  
HARRIS  
RONAN  
BYRNE  
CONDON  
NEESON  
CUNNINGHAM  
BROSNAN  
BRANAGH  
SHAW  
GLEESON  
KEOGHAN  
NEGGA  
DORNAN

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C	B	R	A	N	A	G	H	G	S	S	C	R	E
F	H	Y	R	E	N	E	O	I	N	N	U	E	G
E	W	H	E	O	M	H	R	C	N	A	N	K	I
R	I	P	L	A	N	R	Y	D	H	N	N	C	G
B	Y	R	N	E	A	A	O	O	F	O	I	I	S
N	M	U	E	H	G	H	N	R	A	D	N	R	G
A	E	M	N	G	R	I	U	N	H	N	G	F	G
D	S	A	E	R	I	N	Y	A	A	O	H	C	N
H	R	N	H	O	R	D	O	N	A	C	A	I	N
N	H	L	N	A	O	S	M	N	N	R	M	W	M
R	A	S	E	A	R	I	A	N	O	S	E	E	N

# CRIME IN DUBLIN

How bad is crime in Dublin? What are the facts?



It's bad. People in Dublin are five times more likely to be robbed than those anywhere else in Ireland.

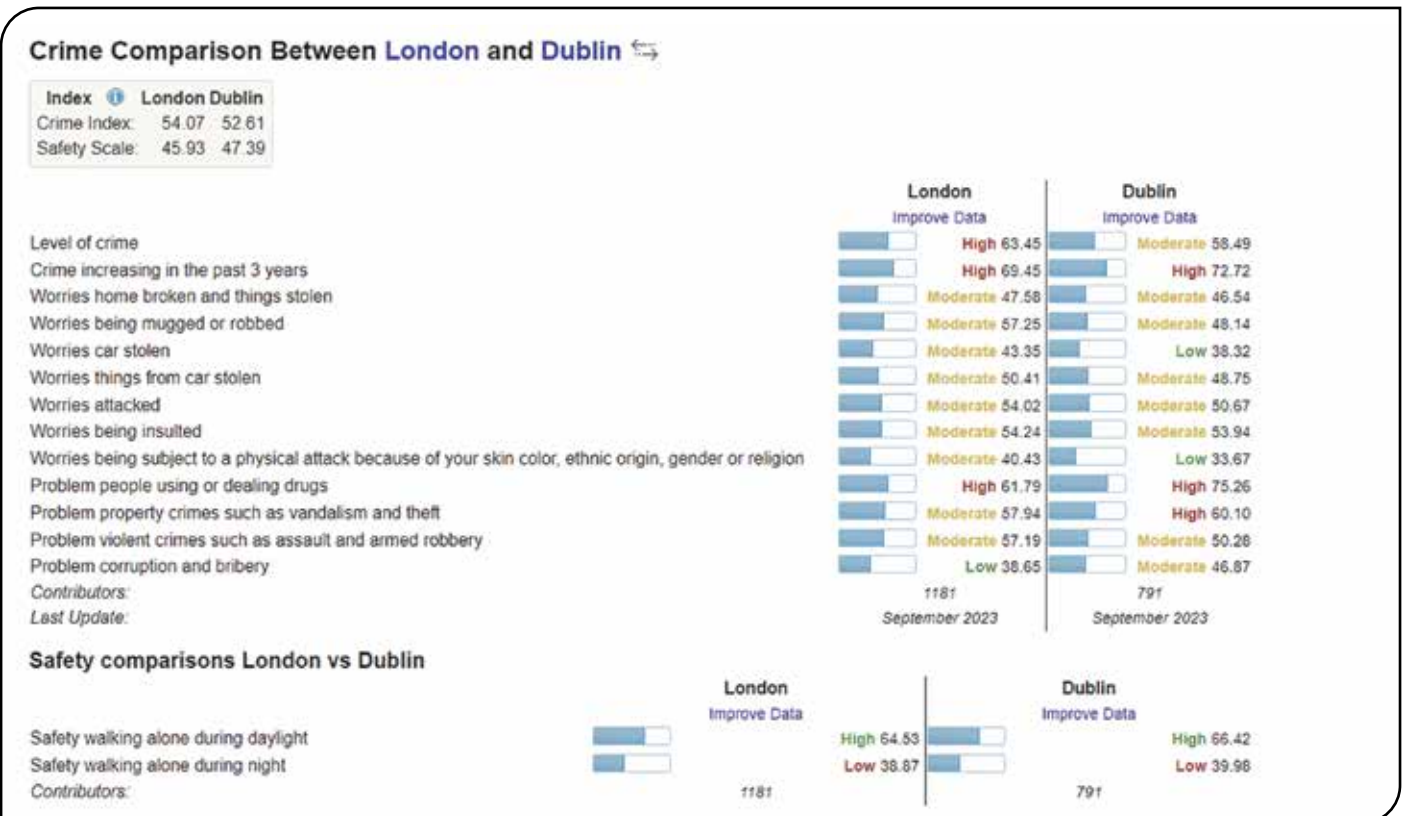
New CSO stats show that the level of robbery, burglary, and theft in Dublin exceeds all other regions by far – you'd be five times more likely to get robbed, or experience extortion or hijacking in Dublin than anywhere else in Ireland. The Dublin Metropolitan Region also has the highest recorded sexual offences rate in 2021, but only 15 per cent of sexual offences led to a charge or summons in 2021.

But it has also been revealed that Dublin's detection

rates for murder, assaults and thefts are the lowest in Ireland, despite having the highest crime rate in the country. A detection means that a suspected offender is issued with a charge or summons and faces prosecution in the Courts for most crimes. Last year's recorded crime detection rates for most crimes were lower than in 2020.

How do we compare with our nearest capital city. See the chart below.

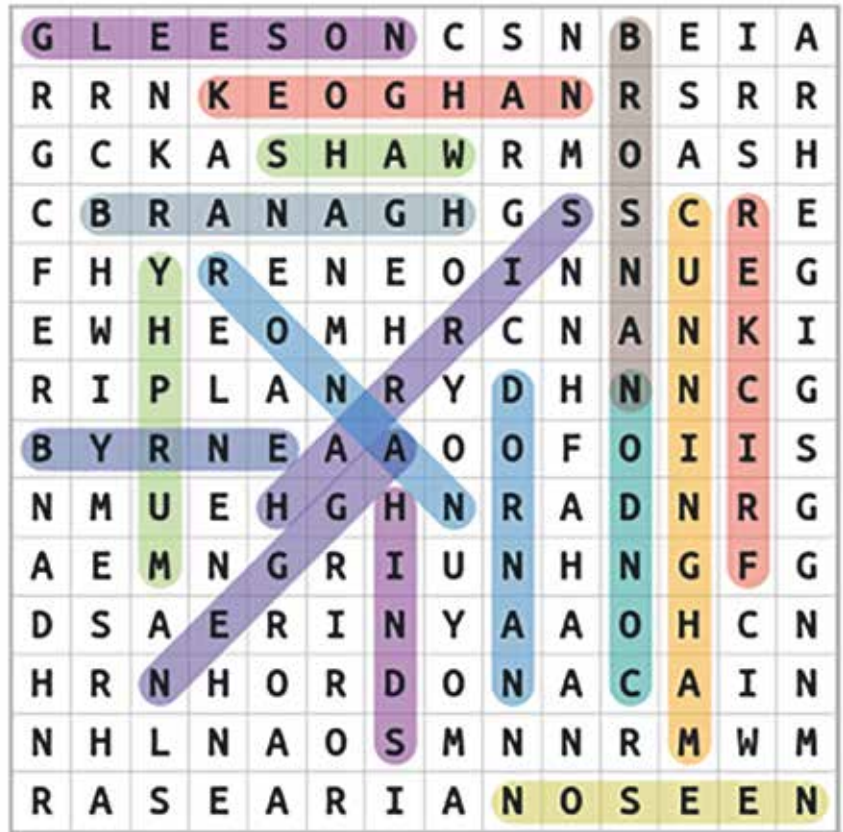
Dublin is a great city, but crime is destroying our reputation and more importantly, the quality of life for its citizens.





# Wordsearch (Answers)

MURPHY  
 HINDS  
 FRICKER  
 HARRIS  
 RONAN  
 BYRNE  
 CONDON  
 NEESON  
 CUNNINGHAM  
 BROSANAN  
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# BEING IRISH

Everybody's Irish identity is their own and we choose to express it and celebrate it in our own separate ways, none better than the other.



**H**ere are a few quotes from some of Ireland's greats on what being Irish meant to them.

1. "Being Irish, he had an abiding sense of tragedy, which sustained him through temporary periods of joy."  
— W.B. Yeats, Irish poet.

2. "To be Irish is to know that in the end the world will break your heart."  
— Daniel Patrick Moynihan, American politician, and sociologist.

3. "When anyone asks me about the Irish character, I say look at the trees. Maimed, stark and misshapen, but ferociously tenacious."  
— Edna O'Brien, Irish novelist, memoirist, playwright, poet and short story writer.

4. "...that it is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language."  
— Brian Friel, author of "Translations"

5. "If there were only three Irishmen in the world, you'd find two of them in a corner talking about the other."  
— María Brandán Aráoz, Argentinian author.

6. "We Irish prefer embroideries to plain cloth. To us Irish, memory is a canvas—stretched, primed, and ready for painting on. We love the "story" part of the word "history," and we love it trimmed out with colour and drama, ribbons and bows. Listen to our tunes, observe a Celtic scroll: we always decorate our essence."  
— Frank Delaney, Irish novelist, journalist, and broadcaster.

7. "Wherever they went the Irish brought with them their books, many unseen in Europe for centuries and tied to their waists as signs of triumph, just as Irish heroes had once tied to their waists their enemies' heads. Where they went, they brought their love of learning and their skills in bookmaking. In the bays and valleys of their exile, they reestablished literacy and breathed new

life into the exhausted literary culture of Europe.

And that is how the Irish saved civilization."  
— Thomas Cahill, American scholar, and writer.

8. "The Celt, and his cromlechs, and his pillar-stones, these will not change much – indeed, it is doubtful if anybody at all changes at any time. In spite of hosts of deniers, and asserters, and wise-men, and professors, the majority still are averse to sitting down to dine thirteen at a table, or being helped to salt, or walking under a ladder, or seeing a single magpie flirting his chequered tale. There are, of course, children of light who have set their faces against all this, although even a newspaperman, if you entice him into a cemetery at midnight, will believe in phantoms, for everyone is a visionary, if you scratch him deep enough. But the Celt, unlike any other, is a visionary without scratching."  
— W.B. Yeats

9. "My people – before I was changed – they exchanged this as a sign of devotion. It's a Claddagh ring. The hands represent friendship; the crown represents loyalty... and the heart... Well, you know... Wear it with the heart pointing towards you. It means you belong to somebody. Like this."  
— Joss Whedon, American screenwriter, film and television director, film, and television producer.

10. "Thankfully the rest of the world assumed that the Irish were crazy, a theory that the Irish themselves did nothing to debunk. They had somehow got it into their heads that each fairy lugged around a pot of gold with him wherever he went. While it was true that LEP had a ransom fund, because of its officers' high-risk occupation, no human had ever taken a chunk of it yet. This didn't stop the Irish population in general from skulking around rainbows, hoping to win the supernatural lottery."  
— Eoin Colfer, author of "Artemis Fowl."

11. "For you can't hear Irish tunes without knowing you're Irish and wanting to pound that fact into the floor."  
— Jennifer Armstrong, author of "Becoming Mary Mehan"



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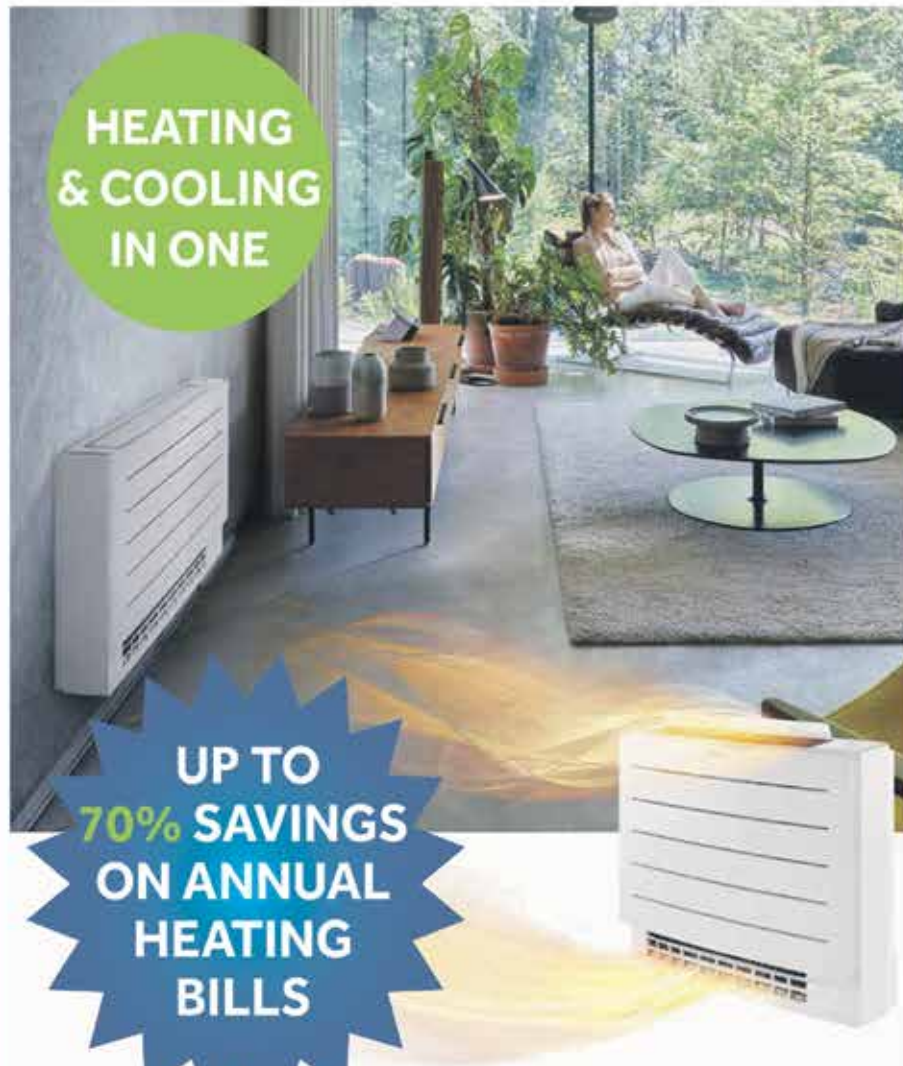
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# IN PRAISE OF FOLLIES

## Celbridge, Famine, and Katherine Conolly

Your History Your Home series by Mike Power.



### Ireland in the 1700s

The Ireland of the 18th cent was a very unequal society. Vast estates had been transferred from native Catholics to the protestant ascendancy in the wake of Cromwell's cruel devastation of the country. At this time, just 10% of the English

population owned 80% of the land! Landless Catholics lived a precarious existence on the edge of life, unsure of where their next meal would be coming from.

. Some of the native Irish grubbed out a miserly living on tiny plots growing high-yielding



varieties of potatoes. Even this food source, however, was very subject to the vagaries of weather or disease. It may not be well known that Ireland also experienced regular famines before the 'great' famine of 1845-49. These were days before welfare or any other state support, most landlords having had a very poor record of cushioning their tenants in financial difficulty.

### Grand Houses.

Grand houses sprang up aplenty all over the country at this time, many of them built in the newly fashionable Palladian style that was all the range in England. Irish society was a highly stratified one with little hope of advancement for someone not born to nobility. One exception to this rule however, was 'Speaker' William Conolly who sprang from humble origins in county Donegal, qualified as a lawyer, coming to Dublin to make his fortune.

Called 'speaker' from his work in this important political position (1715-1729) in the famous Irish parliament of those times, Connolly had bought up vast estates very cheaply, making him one of the richest men in Ireland. In 1694 he married Katherine (nee Conyngham) from Slane castle, a most capable, accomplished, and compassionate Irish woman, as we shall later see.

### Castletown House.

'Speaker' William Conolly is probably best known to us today for his building of Castletown House (1722) in Celbridge, one of Ireland's finest Georgian houses. This was partly designed by the Florentine architect Alessandro Galilei but most of the work was actually done by Edward Lovett Pearce (1699-1733) one of the finest architects of that day.

The house was the centrepiece of Connolly's 800-acre estate and patriotically, he insisted



that all building materials used in the building should only come from Ireland. Connolly later also commissioned the building of the Old Custom House and the Irish Houses of Parliament. Following his death in 1729, his wife Katherine assumed responsibility for the running of the estate.

This period in Ireland's history was notable for the eminence of its highly accomplished women. There was the writer Maria Edgeworth, the socialite Mrs Mary Delaney, the botanist Ellen Hutchins and the artist and biologist Mary Ward. Independent wealth provided opportunities to these women not usually given to their less well-off sisters. Katherine Connolly encouraged talent wherever she found it, making no distinction of class or religion

On the demise of her wealthy husband, Katherine embarked on a solo career as the custodian of Castletown, a political hostess and a generous philanthropist. Always conscious of the needs of the poor, she built a boarding school in Celbridge (1733) which she continued to support with endowments.

### 'Celbridge'

Katherine also built a memorial to her beloved husband in Kildroght church. Interestingly this is the name that 'Celbridge' (i.e., the church by the bridge) was originally called, from the medieval castle, monastery and mill which once stood here along the first main street.

While political power in 18th cent Ireland was ostensibly dominated by menfolk, wealthy and influential women were not without their own 'soft power'. This power was often exercised at fashionable soirees or drawing room parties, where the hostess invited the 'movers' and 'shakers' of the day to an evening's fashionable entertainment. Katherine's soirees soon became the 'hottest ticket in town' attended by eminent people such as the writer and satirist Jonathan Swift,

George Handel the composer, Luke Gardiner

the land developer, and many of the great and good politicians and statesmen of those days.

### The Famine of 1739-40.

The famine of 1740 in Ireland was caused by a number of factors, chief among them being a prolonged period of severe cold and frost caused by a stationary high stretching across all Europe from Moscow to Dublin. This resulted in the destruction of the all-important potato crop for a number of seasons, leading to widespread famine and disease. In addition, the cold also destroyed the potato seeds for following years, leading to even more prolonged hardship.

Conscious of her suffering tenants, Katherine resolved on building a charitable folly to provide income for food and to suitably commemorate her husband. This charity relief project was begun in 1740 and took the form of a large obelisk topped by an impressive column. Designed by William Castle/Cassels(1690-1751) it cost £400 (40,000 Euro today) and stands 42 metres high. It is adorned with stone pineapples and eagles, symbols of prosperity and strength respectively.

This structure was designed to line up perfectly with Castletown's front entrance and can still be seen today from some 2.5 miles away. This monument is now in the care of the state, its image being the official logo of The Irish Georgian Society. It can be viewed today by visitors to the Castletown estate, Celbridge, Co Kildare.

Katherine passed away in the house she loved in Sept 1752. Though' born to the manor' she lived her life ever conscious of the needs of those not so fortunate. Katherine was one of the very few landlords in Ireland who had a genuine interest in the tenants on her estate and who earnestly strove to improve life for them. For these and her other many sterling qualities, she deserves to be remembered as one of Ireland's finest and most accomplished women.





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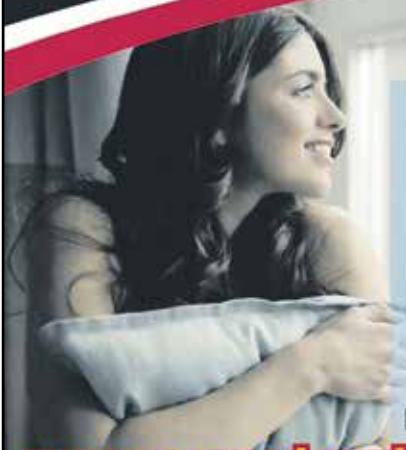
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SCAN ME



# What is Career Guidance & how Guidance helps You?

By Stephen Byrne, Guidance counsellor (15/09/2023)



## What is Career Guidance?

Career guidance counselling is impartial. Guidance is not just for school days, but to support you during your lifetime. Guidance support helps you explore your full range of choices and plans in your career journey. Your journey may involve pathways in education, training, and employment. Change can be consistent in your working life. The labour market changes, job skill requirements change, what you value for your career and life changes. You may have asked yourself the questions, should I stay or go, how do I decide, where do I start?

On average people may have between 10 and 12 different jobs in their career journey by age 38 (IBEC, 2018). More than half of workers in Ireland are considering changing jobs, and 1 in 5 over the next 12 months (PWC, 2022/2023).

## How does Career Guidance help You?

As a guidance counsellor over the past 9 years, I have supported people to build their career management skills. I develop these skills with people, to make plans towards their goal. Each career goal will involve challenge, change, decisions, plans, and actions to keep focused with motivation.

- Applying for pathways in (FET) Further education & training colleges (PLCs) Post leaving cert courses.
- Applying for Apprenticeships.
- Applying for CAO colleges.

- Job seeking & applications.
- Learning while working options.
- Developing your CV.
- Exploring Your work life balance.
- Using social media & networking to find employment.
- Managing finance & costs of learning.
- Getting work experience.
- Studying abroad.
- Building up literacy and language skills.

There are many paths to choose, professional support and guidance offers you the chance to understand your change and next steps with confidence.

The very best of luck in your career journey. Where would you like to start?

## References/ Web citations:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2015; Ibec (2018) Smarter World Smarter Work [<https://www.smartfutures.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Informed-Choices-Career-Guidance.pdf>] [web links accessed, 12/09/2023].

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# FUEL PRICES

Cheaper oil and falling wholesale gas and electricity prices have left many wondering why we're still paying record prices for our energy. We decided to investigate why household gas and electricity bills aren't coming down. Courtesy of bonkers.ie



It's been a tough two years for energy customers.

All suppliers announced major price increases last year on the back of multiple price increases in 2021.

This has left gas and electricity prices in Ireland at record highs and left many households struggling to cope with their bills.

But over the past few months energy prices on wholesale markets have dropped, leading many to wonder why they aren't seeing any falls in their bills?

In this article we look at what's been happening in the energy world and whether households can look forward to cheaper gas and electricity any time soon.

## Falling oil prices

Much has been made about the fall in the price of oil in recent months.

Oil is trading at around \$70 to \$80 a barrel, down significantly from its highs last summer when it reached over \$120 a barrel following the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

However, we use oil to generate only around 3% of our electricity these days. So, its price has very little impact on the overall cost of our electricity.

On top of this, oil is sold in dollars and the euro has been quite weak against the dollar in recent months.

At the start of 2022, €1 was worth around \$1.15. However, this fell as low as \$0.96 last summer. Though



the euro has since recovered a bit this year.

This has meant that a lot of the benefit of the fall in the price of oil has been negated by the weaker euro.

### Fall in the wholesale price of electricity

Last October the Central Statistics Office (CSO) announced that wholesale electricity prices had fallen by 52% compared to the previous month. Which made big news and left many wondering why they weren't seeing cheaper energy bills.

More recently, for June, the CSO said wholesale electricity prices had dropped over 35% compared to the year before.

However, wholesale energy prices are still at a very high level. At one stage during last summer, the price of gas was up by well over 1,000% on a yearly basis on wholesale markets. And in March 2022 the wholesale price of electricity in Ireland was up by over 400% compared to the year before. So, when we hear of falling prices, we need to remember that it's on the back of prices which were at record highs to begin with.

The average price of electricity for the first six months of the year is still around €136 per MWh for example. That's still over THREE times what would be considered normal levels.

Meanwhile, on the UK gas market, from where we import about 75% of our gas, the price of gas has been trading at very high levels until very recently. It has now fallen hugely. But due to hedging, which we discuss below, this benefit won't be felt by consumers immediately.

Date	Wholesale electricity price per MWh
2020 average	€38
2021 average	€136
2022 average	€226
June 2023	€117
2023 year to date	€136

\*SEM Day Ahead market price

### Hedging

Another important point to remember is that energy suppliers buy their energy for delivery at different times throughout the year, and sometimes up to 12 or 24 months in advance through hedging.

So, the price households pay for their gas and electricity is usually an average price of the cost of energy on wholesale markets over the course of up to two years. This is to try ensure households aren't faced with extreme swings in the price of their gas and

electricity on a weekly or monthly basis.

As mentioned, gas prices were up by over 1,000% last summer while electricity prices were up by over 400% at one stage last spring. But thanks to hedging an increase of this size wasn't passed on to households.

Buying in advance also means suppliers can be sure they have enough energy to meet their customers' demands.

However, a downside of hedging is that falls in the price of energy aren't immediately passed on either. This is important to remember now in relation to gas. The price of gas has fallen hugely over the past few months and is now a lot closer to pre-war levels of around 50 pence a therm. However, most suppliers will only have bought a tiny fraction of their supply at this recent price.

Due to hedging, there needs to be a sustained reduction in the price of energy on wholesale markets for several months before the benefit is felt by consumers.

### What does the future hold?

The drop in gas and electricity prices on wholesale markets in recent months has largely been due to good weather. While strong wind output has helped ease electricity prices too.

Europe experienced an extremely mild winter which helped keep demand for gas far lower than expected, which has contributed to a drop in its price. And as we use gas to generate around 40% of our electricity, this has helped push electricity prices down too.

There has also been a strong supply of liquified natural gas (LNG) into Europe which has helped replace Russian piped gas and eased concerns over shortages.

The level of power outages at generation plants is also down compared to recent years. In 2020 and 2021 two of the country's biggest electricity power plants at Whitegate in Cork and Huntstown in Dublin were out of action for a prolonged period which put big pressure on the electricity grid and prices. Keeping power outages at electricity plants under control will also be critical for Ireland's electricity prices over the coming months.

Any further escalation in the Russian and Ukrainian conflict could also see prices shoot back up.

### Nothing to pass on

In short, household energy bills haven't reduced in recent weeks because there's been no real reduction to pass on. Yet.

Gas has been trading way above its normal price until very recently. While electricity is still trading at around three times its price compared to two years ago.

But if the trend continues, we should see moderate falls before the end of the year.

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# REOPEN SILVER BRIDGE



The historic Farmleigh Bridge (also known as the Silver, Guinness and Strawberry Beds Bridge), spans the Liffey Valley between Palmerstown on the south, and the Strawberry Beds on the north.

This autumn will see Farmleigh Bridge returned to its former splendour, following a €1.5 million restoration. But despite this much-needed investment, the Bridge will remain closed to the public.

Many years ago it served as a link between Palmerstown Village and Farmleigh House.

Today it could connect two West Dublin parks, the Phoenix Park and Waterstown Park and become

- A much-loved amenity for local families;
- A magnet for day-trippers and international tourists; and
- A hub for active and sustainable travel.

I have called on the Government and local authorities (Fingal, South Dublin and Dublin County Council) to re-open Farmleigh Bridge as a first step towards developing a Liffey Valley Park.

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# DOG FOULING FINES

Just 82 dog fouling fines handed out in 2022 as blind or vision impaired community calls on dog owners to clean up and Clear Our Paths



**D**ata gathered by NCBI as part of our Clear Our Paths campaign shows that just 82 dog fouling fines were handed out by local councils over the course of 2022.

Information, provided by the local councils at the request of NCBI, showed that 18 councils from around the country handed out zero dog fouling fines over the course of last year. Kerry County Council had the highest number of fines with 27 and the council reported that there were two convictions related to those fines.

Dog fouling is a huge issue for people who are blind, or vision impaired who use our footpaths daily. A recent NCBI survey showed that it was the third most frequent unexpected obstacle encountered by respondents. Not only can dog fouling cause a slip hazard, but it can also be distressing for white cane users whose canes are often dirtied by faeces.

Cars parked on footpaths emerged as the number one obstacle faced by respondents to our survey. NCBI recently learned that over 19,000 fines were

handed out in 2022 for issues around street and inappropriate parking. Three councils reported that they had not handed out any fines, while Mayo County Council said there were no fines handed out in the Claremorris/Swinford area. Roscommon County Council said there are no traffic wardens in the county.

Parking inappropriately, especially on footpaths, causes a serious hazard for people who are blind or vision impaired. If a footpath is blocked, people with sight loss may be injured by walking into traffic to get around a vehicle, injured walking into the vehicle, or injured by stepping off kerbs in unfamiliar locations.

A full breakdown of the fines handed out for dog fouling and for cars parked inappropriately can be found below.

NCBI recognises local councils' efforts and challenges to support clear paths in their communities and some councils provided information about positive steps they have taken to curb the dangers posed by dog fouling in particular.



- Laois County Council confirmed that it had given out 96 mutt mitt dispensers to Tidy Towns groups around the county.

- Tipperary County Council said it ran an anti-dog fouling stencil campaign in two municipal districts with messaging around cleaning up after a dog and about fines.

- Wexford County Council said it, among other things, had provided free pooper scoopers and bins in towns, villages and at blue flag beaches.

- Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Council said it runs a Green Dog Walkers programme to encourage all dog walkers to pick up after their pets.

Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste is supporting this year's Clear Our Paths campaign with NCBI advocates who shared their concerns with him. He said: "The stories and challenges I've heard today have made it clear to me that we, the general public, need to work harder to keep our paths safe for people who are blind or vision impaired. It is important that we take an extra few second each day to ensure that our actions do not impact the ability of people who are blind, or vision impaired to get out and about safely. Please support Clear Our Paths in whatever way you can, your small gesture can make a huge difference."

Aaron Mullaniff, Chief Services Officer with NCBI said: "We would like to thank Lord Mayor Daithí de Róiste for his generous support of this important campaign. This new data we have gathered is a means to explain to the public the dangers of dog fouling on footpaths and the dangers of cars parked on footpaths. Firstly, the dog fouling data shows that councils can't be expected to police the issue alone.

It's impractical to think that wardens could observe every single dog owner who doesn't clean up after their dog and then issue them with a fine. There needs to be significant effort from the public to clean up after their pets in the first instance. It's imperative that we all work to make our footpaths usable for all members in our communities.

"Secondly, if councils have noted over 19,000 incidents of inappropriate parking by way of a fine, can you imagine how many undetected instances there are that will pose a real risk to those living with sight loss? We're asking everyone in Ireland to put yourself in a blind or vision impaired person's shoes when you're walking your pets, parking your car, putting out your bins or whatever it might be, and to act in a way that's considerate to those people's needs."

As part of this campaign, NCBI has created a webpage aimed at supporting members of the public to have conversations with family members and friends about the importance of their own behaviour. We can all be active bystanders through our own actions and words and NCBI is asking people to start a positive conversation to encourage others to make sure our footpaths are clear and safe for everyone in our community.

NCBI's #ClearOurPaths campaign will run across social media from August 21st to 25th, highlighting the different obstacles each day. We encourage others to join us by sharing on their social media channels too. Together, we can garner a greater understanding among the public about the needs of people with sight loss and how unexpected obstacles can impact their daily lives.

Council	Fines issued.	Fines Issued (Parking)
South Dublin	No figure provided	807
Fingal	9	1857
Louth	9	164
Limerick City & County	5	788
Kildare	3	429
Laois	3	124
Roscommon	3	0 (no traffic wardens in the county)
Kerry	27(and 2 convictions)	379
Clare	2	120
Galway County	2	20
Cork County Council	17	266
Cork City Council	1	2337
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	1	2426



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# Are we alone? The search for intelligent life in the universe

Nasa's James Webb Space Telescope may have discovered tentative evidence of a sign of life on a faraway planet.



It may have detected a molecule called dimethyl sulphide (DMS). On Earth, at least, this is only produced by life.

The researchers stress that the detection on the planet 120 light years away is “not robust” and more data is needed to confirm its presence.

Researchers have also detected methane and CO<sub>2</sub> in the planet’s atmosphere.

Detection of these gases could mean the planet, named K2-18b, has a water ocean.

Prof Nikku Madhusudhan, of the University of Cambridge, who led the research, said his entire team were “shocked” when they saw the results.

“On Earth, DMS is only produced by life. The bulk of it in Earth’s atmosphere is emitted from phytoplankton in marine environments,” he said.

## Caution

But Prof Madhusudhan described the detection of DMS as tentative and said that more data would be needed to confirm its presence. Those results are expected in a year.

“If confirmed, it would be a huge deal and I feel a responsibility to get this right if we are making such a big claim.”

It is the first time astronomers have detected the possibility of DMS in a planet orbiting a distant star. But they are treating the results with caution, noting

that a claim made in 2020 about the presence of another molecule, called phosphine, that could be produced by living organisms in the clouds of Venus was disputed a year later.

Even so, Dr Robert Massey, who is independent of the research and deputy director of the Royal Astronomical Society in London, said he was excited by the results.

“We are slowly moving towards the point where we will be able to answer that big question as to whether we are alone in the Universe or not,” he said.

“I’m optimistic that we will one day find signs of life. Perhaps it will be this, perhaps in 10 or even 50 years we will have evidence that is so compelling that it is the best explanation.”

JWST is able to analyse the light that passes through the faraway planet’s atmosphere. That light contains the chemical signature of molecules in its atmosphere. The details can be deciphered by splitting the light into its constituent frequencies - rather like a prism creating a rainbow spectrum. If parts of the resulting spectrum are missing, it has been absorbed by chemicals in the planet’s atmosphere, enabling researchers to discover its composition.


The feat is all the more remarkable because the planet is more than 1.1 million billion km away, so the amount of light reaching the space telescope is tiny.





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# TIDYING THE GARDEN IN AUTUMN

Tidying the garden in autumn keeps it looking neat in winter and means that Autumn is the ideal time to give your garden a thorough tidy, before the cold weather sets in.



**A**s well as clearing fallen leaves, there are lots of other simple tasks that will make a big difference to the look of your garden.

It's worth putting in a little extra time and effort now, so your garden will look neat and well-tended through the winter months - it will also mean that you've got a head start next spring.

## **Tidy your borders**

Tidying the garden - clearing dead leaves and stems from a border by hand.

Remove dying leaves and collapsed stems from herbaceous perennials, either pulling by hand or cutting at the base with secateurs. Leave any stems that have attractive seedheads for birds to enjoy. Remove weeds, then spread compost or well-rotted



manure over the soil to insulate plant roots - the worms will work it in over winter.

### Collect autumn leaves

Tidying the garden - gathering brown, fallen oak leaves with an extended metal grabber

A few piles of leaves in out-of-the-way places - under hedges, for example - can provide shelter for overwintering wildlife. But remove leaves from your lawn, paths (which can be slippery) and borders. Use them to make leaf mould, a great soil improver.

Autumn leaves fall in huge quantities during October and November, quickly covering lawns and borders. Left in place they can smother grass and fill the crowns of herbaceous perennials, sometimes killing them.

### Leave your lawn looking trim

Tidying the garden - trimming the edge of a lawn beside a path with an edging knife

Nothing sets off borders better than a neatly cut and edged lawn, so mow for the final time. Set your mower blades higher than usual to leave the grass slightly longer over winter, then cut the edges with an edging

tool or knife to redefine their pristine lines.

### Make repairs

Repair damage to raised beds, sheds and compost bins, and paint them with wood preservative. Replace any rotting fence posts, so they don't get blown down in winter storms. Ensure shed roofs don't leak and replace any broken panes or faulty vents in greenhouses.

### Clean out nest boxes and feeders.

Take down bird boxes and empty them. Old nesting material, unfertilised eggs and other debris may carry diseases, so wash out the boxes with hot water before putting them back. Also remember to clean out feeders and bird baths, and regularly refill them.

### Sort out your pond

Tidying the garden - scooping fallen leaves from a garden pond with a net

Scoop out leaves that have blown into your pond before they sink down and start to rot. Also cut back the foliage of marginal pond plants that have died down. Remove pond pumps and fountains that are no longer in use. Wash them out thoroughly, then store over winter.

**Rest assured. Have your own say.**

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# MARYMOUNT

## CARE CENTRE



## **Marymount is pleased to launch a new scheme of purpose-built Supported Living Homes.**

Marymount Care Centre, owned and operated by the McNulty family for the past 36 years, is set on 16 acres of open countryside located just off the Strawberry Beds in Westmanstown, Lucan.

Since its establishment, the team at Marymount has constantly striven to develop and innovate the care and support they provide to its residents.

This mission was at the heart of its most recent development of a unique and exclusive scheme of supported living homes called 'The Grove'.

'The Grove' encompasses 12 purpose-built bungalows and is specifically designed for those who are seeking a secure, comfortable and convenient setting which actively promotes and supports their independent living.

These generously proportioned 2-bedroom homes are fully equipped with all modern comforts and, for added convenience, are inclusive of all utilities. The Grove also has on site security as well as maintained landscaped garden spaces to enjoy.

The design concept for these independent living units incorporates technology to support comfort, convenience, and security for each of its residents.

This easy-to-use technology includes automation, environmental control, concierge services, and communication tools intended to positively impact on quality of life and independence.

Importantly, 'The Grove' also seeks to promote resident wellbeing through community living and access to a range of optional on-site services including

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- Laundry
- Gym
- Physiotherapy and Chiropody
- Newspaper Delivery
- Optician
- Hairdressing
- Religious Services

**For further information visit [www.marymountcarecentre.ie/the-grove](http://www.marymountcarecentre.ie/the-grove)  
To make an enquiry, please contact Conor or Fergus  
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