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NOV/DEC 2023

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Cllr Derren Ó Brádaigh

Representing Lucan - Palmerstown - Nth Clondalkin - Balgaddy - Fonthill

CONTACT: South Dublin County Council, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the November edition of Little Village

We have local features and articles of general interest. Including how soon you should start Christmas and winter changes.

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

Kind Regards
Little Village



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LITTLE VILLAGE MAGAZINE

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Free bedtime story book for all children aged 4 and under in Kildare

Kildare County Council are delighted to announce the Kildare Library Service First 5 Little Book at Bedtime initiative, in collaboration with public libraries and the Local Government Management Agency.



Free bedtime story books and library card wallets are available at the library for all children of 4 years and under, to pick up and keep. This exciting initiative aims to engage all parents of young children to read stories with them at bedtime.

From the 6th of October, parents and their children can pop into their local library to pick up their free bedtime story book and join the library. Bedtime story books are available in English and Irish.

Roderic O’Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Heather Humphreys, Minister for Rural and Community Development on Friday, 6 October launched the initiative.

Speaking at the launch, Minister O’Gorman said; “Reading bedtime stories to children has many benefits including supporting a close parental bond, developing children’s language and their imagination. As the winter draws in, what a lovely time for parents and young children to cosy up and read together as part of the daily bedtime routine. I hope all families

with young children will avail of this opportunity to pick up a free bedtime story book from the library”.

Minister Humphreys added: “Every library in the country has bedtime story books ready for parents and children to pick up. I commend the work of the libraries in supporting this initiative. I want every child in the country to be a library member and for children to share the lovely experience of having stories read to them at bedtime. Introducing children to the joy of stories and reading together is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give a child. I know librarians across the country are looking forward to greeting all these young children when they come to pick up their Little Book at Bedtime.”

Kildare Library Service look forward to welcoming parents, guardians and children to the library to collect their free book and wallet. We love to see parents and children picking out books to read together, knowing the many benefits that has for children’s wellbeing, literacy and love of reading. We hope families will see the resources and services the library offers and return to borrow books, attend events and more.

YOUR INDEPENDENT COUNCILLOR #teamotoole

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Peace
Commissioner

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Councillor
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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.

Why we see more spiders and insects inside our homes in autumn

The tell-tale signs that autumn is here are clear to us; the days are getting shorter, and the temperature is decreasing.



We take this as a sign to pull out our winter woollies and think about turning on the radiators. But how do insects know that winter is coming? And what do they do to prepare?

Folklore has suggested over the years that insects and other invertebrates can predict the weather and that, for example, we could start to see bigger spider webs if the weather is going to get colder. The evidence for those bigger webs ahead of bad weather is weak. But there certainly are changes in insect behaviour we can see at this time of year, and it shows they are predicting

changes they need to make as the weather changes.

Insects are extremely sensitive to changes in the environment and change in light is the main cue that insects use to signal the change in seasons. Insects, like humans, detect light with their eyes. But unlike humans insects have more than two eyes. In addition to the two big compound eyes that they have on the front of their heads most insects also have three smaller eyes on the top of their heads called ocelli. Light information is passed from their eyes to the brain and interpreted by an internal clock to detect the changing seasons, which may also be important in humans

and other primates.

Responding to the changing seasons is really important for insects as they are cold blooded and can't regulate their own body temperature. But insects have different ways of coping with the oncoming cold weather. Some, like the painted lady butterfly, leave the UK in autumn heading to north Africa where they breed. Others produce their own "antifreeze" proteins that allow them to cope with winter temperatures. However, the majority of insects undergo a slowing down process called diapause, where they essentially sleep for the winter.

At this time of year, these insects, and other arthropods like spiders, are looking for a sheltered place to spend the winter – and this is why we see more spiders in our houses at this time of year. You may also notice groups of insects, like ladybirds, huddled on windowsills and under rocks. These insects will stay protected over the winter and reawaken in spring.

Because of migration, diapause and the natural death of some insects at the end of the summer, you may generally feel there are fewer insects around than just a few weeks ago. But there

are some new ones emerging that we didn't see earlier in the summer. In the south you might spot the beautiful ivy bee which is only active when the ivy is in blossom. Autumn also brings the mass emergence of crane flies, which, although they look a bit like mosquitos, are actually harmless.

You also might notice more wasps visiting flowers to drink the sugary nectar - at this time of year they become very hungry for sugar. Wasps don't really care where they get their sugar fix from and are just as likely to try and steal our sugary drinks as we are enjoying the last of the summer in our gardens or enjoying a walk. Their craving for sugar is actually really beneficial as their visits flower-to-flower, trying to satisfy their insatiable craving, lead them to pollinate flowers just like bees.

For me the most striking sign of autumn is the appearance of a lot of very large bumblebees out visiting the last flowers of the season. These large bees are next year's queens. After being born late in the summer season they mate and stock up on energy before finding a place to hibernate for the winter. When we see them again it'll be an indicator that spring is on its way when the queens emerge from their sleep and make new nests.

Rest assured. Have your own say.

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Further Lucan Pool Delay Eroding Confidence

An announcement this evening of yet further delays to the much anticipated opening of the Lucan Pool is being met with sheer frustration and calls for greater accountability and consequences for contractors failing to meet deadlines for publicly procured projects.



Cllr Derren Ó Brádaigh was speaking tonight following the news and said. “This evening I received an email correspondence from the Director in South Dublin County Council regarding yet another postponement to the latest expected delivery time for the end of October. This really has become unacceptable. Work commenced on this pool project 5 years ago with an investment in the region of €10m. There have been plausible reasons for delays to a point, including impacts from the Covid pandemic and challenges in the construction industry, however, there is now simply no credibility remaining in the community, in terms of opening times being provided to anyone.

Cllr Ó Brádaigh said. “The contractor has been unable to either increase the resources on site to a sufficient level or to effectively coordinate the work from sub-contractors to meet this month’s eagerly anticipated deadline we are being told. There remains an issue with the moveable floor being delivered now and the lead-in time for this could be up to

12 weeks. It would seem to me that we won’t be seeing the pool open this side of Christmas. This must bring into focus the system currently in place and consequences in terms of meeting agreed public project contractual arrangements.

Cllr Ó Brádaigh also said. “Previously Council officials stated that the delays were obviously far beyond what could reasonably have been envisaged at the outset of the project. They said at the time that the well-documented significant and unprecedented challenges in construction in recent years, due to various local and global factors outside of the control of the contractor and the Council accounted for considerable delays, but also stated that project management and performance have also contributed to the timeframe.

Ó Brádaigh concluded. “As a councillor, I can no longer offer a response to members of the community that I represent and when asked about works schedules, as I have personally become somewhat sceptical about timelines that we receive in general on project works. This impacts on our own credibility and people’s confidence in anything else we say.”



For enquiries regarding our courses contact our Guidance Counsellors:

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- Pharmacy Assistant

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- Social Studies/Social Care
- Youth and Community Work
- Applied Psychology with Criminology
- Criminology, Psychology with Law
- Security Studies and Criminology *NEW*

Education and Childcare

- Early Learning and Care (Childcare)
- Pre-University Arts/Teaching
- Pre-University PE Teaching and Coaching
- Special Needs and Classroom Assistant
Primary and Post Primary

Science

- Pre-University Science
- Pre-University Agricultural Science
- Pre-University Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Science
- Pre-University Forensic Science
- Pre-University Environmental Science
- Pre-University Sports Science
- Pre-University Food Science, Nutrition, Health and Wellbeing
- Pre-University Animal Science
- Pre-University Physiotherapy
- Advanced Animal Science

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- Accounting Technician Apprenticeship *NEW*
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Beauty and Hairdressing

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- Pre-Apprenticeship Hairdressing
- Hairdressing Apprenticeship *NEW*
- Advanced Beauty Therapy

Sports

- Pre-University PE Teaching and Coaching
- Sports Management with Business
- Personal Training and Fitness Instruction
- Sports Rehabilitation and Physiotherapy Assistant



Call for Reopening of the once-popular Farmleigh/Guinness Bridge

More than a hundred people from the Strawberry Beds, Dublin 15 areas, Palmerstown, Lucan, Celbridge, Leixlip, and Clane attended a meeting recently held in the Castleknock Hotel, hosted by Senator Emer Currie, to discuss the reopening of the once-popular Farmleigh/Guinness Bridge, also referred to as the “Silver Bridge.”



Public officials from Dublin West, including Deputy Emer Higgins, Cllrs. Kieran Dennison, Siobhan Shovlin, Gus O’Connell, Palmerstown local area representative Sikandar Jahanzab, and Clane Cllr Padraig McEvoy, were present.

Speakers included Joe Byrne of the Liffey Valley Park Alliance, Dr. Paul Corcoran of the Rebuild Silver Bridge Campaign, and Senator Emer Currie.

Senator Currie explained why the Office of Public Works’ 2006 Strategy Towards a Liffey Valley Park has to be updated and given top priority.

She stated: “For years, progress has been inhibited establishing a Liffey Valley Park because of a lack of co-ordination across local authorities, the accessibility of the Liffey Valley, and private ownership issues.” During the public meeting, I presented my ideas for resolving those problems. These included implementing walking and cycling routes for active transport, improving access to the breathtaking surroundings of the Liffey Valley, and adopting the same cooperative strategy between landowners and the Council that has been successful in establishing trails and greenways in Mayo and numerous other counties

An advertisement for Mattress Mick's featuring a woman in a red jacket standing with arms outstretched behind several mattresses. The background is yellow and red. Text includes: "..... IRELAND'S GREATEST MATTRESS SALESMAN!", "NEED A MATTRESS NEED ONE QUICK GET ONE NOW FROM ME MATTRESS MICK", "The Mattress Price Fighter", "Mattress Mick's", "COOLOCK UNIT 3 MALAHIDE ROAD IND PARK. 01 - 677 2485", "www.mattressmick.ie", and a circular logo stating "MADE IN IRELAND 100% IRISH MADE MATTRESSES MADE IN IRELAND".

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ISPCC welcomes Budget proposals for improved mental health services for children and young people but notes there's more to be done

ISPCC welcomes Minister Mary Butler's Budget 2024 announcements for children and young people's mental health, in particular the creation of a new central referral mechanism.



This will allow the HSE to triage referrals to the right service ensuring what the Minister refers to as a 'no wrong door' approach. We know first-hand of the frustrations of children and families when they are trying to access appropriate support and end up being moved around from waiting list to waiting list.

The allocation of funding for a new mental health

app is positive and ought to help with signposting users to the services and supports that are available.

We also welcome the Minister's comments on the important role NGOs, such as ISPCC, play in the delivery of mental-health support services in the community. As an organisation dedicated to supporting children and young people, ISPCC recognises the need for systemic change in how

we, as a society, address mental-health concerns. Therefore, it is heartening to hear that a new head has been appointed to lead the work on reforming child and youth mental health.

The Budget 2024 investment is a welcome successor to that contained in Budget 2023. Then, funding was allocated for the first ever Clinical Lead for Youth Mental Health and the establishment of a dedicated National Office for Child and Youth Mental Health. These are both key steps in providing leadership and oversight in this area.

ISPC Head of Policy and Public Affairs Fiona Jennings says that “we recognise the systemic challenges our mental-health sector faces and believe these can only be overcome by a concerted effort among all stakeholders. The announcement of a triage service to help direct children and young people to appropriate services is hugely welcome and will go some way to alleviating waiting lists.

“However, mental health funding remains a long way off from the 10% target of overall health spending by 2025.”

The combination of the proposed triage system, the establishment of the child poverty and wellbeing unit in the Department of An Taoiseach and that mental health may be a spotlight issue in the next national

policy framework for children and young people mean that these initiatives ought to go some way to realising the pathfinder way of working and we welcome this.

Children with complex needs are a group of children who will require a particular focus and all efforts must be employed to ensure they do not slip through the cracks.

There has never been a more important time than now to prioritise the mental health of young people, as families face financial uncertainty, young people tackle new levels of social media pressure and they are exposed to the reality of wars and the aftermath of a global pandemic.

At Childline, we are dedicated to helping children with difficult situations and empowering them to strengthen their resilience, equipping them to cope with adversity and to come back even stronger after a difficult or stressful experience.

Childline can be reached online at Childline.ie or by calling 1800 66 66 66.

The service is confidential, non-judgemental and non-directive, meaning it doesn't tell children and young people how to solve their problems.

Some children may feel that their issue is not important enough to seek support. But we believe everything in life is worth talking about.

Wordsearch

(Answers on Next Page)

HANSEN
RINGROSE
RYAN
MURRAY
AKI
EARLS
FURLONG
SEXTON
HENDERSON
PORTER
DORIS
OMAHONEY
KEENAN
LOWE
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E	F	H	O	S	R	O	R	N	E	L	E	N	R
N	O	L	R	B	X	E	N	H	O	E	R	G	L
O	N	G	N	O	L	R	U	F	D	T	N	A	E
H	K	E	N	N	A	N	O	R	K	B	X	A	E
A	H	A	N	S	E	N	N	E	E	E	H	E	N
M	R	T	A	R	R	O	R	Y	S	I	E	A	S
O	I	F	O	R	E	I	I	A	R	R	N	N	E
D	M	L	O	W	E	E	N	R	Y	N	D	N	R
A	S	O	E	Y	A	E	G	R	A	E	E	N	H
K	I	N	F	U	S	A	R	U	N	H	R	R	R
I	R	R	E	Y	O	A	O	M	N	R	S	A	E
E	O	N	A	S	R	H	S	I	R	O	O	R	O
E	D	G	S	S	I	M	E	Y	S	E	N	N	E

When is the right time to put up your Christmas tree and decorations?



Every year, the expectation of Christmas appears to begin somewhat prior yet there are a wide range of customs and convictions with regards to the best opportunity to begin enriching your home to visit the family.

Quite a long time ago...

During the Victorian period, Christmas trees were customarily set up a lot later in December, frequently on the evening of Christmas Eve.

Straight after Halloween

For some's purposes, Christmas enhancements go up when Halloween closes on 31st October, thus Christmas sweethearts embrace first

November as the beginning of the bubbly season and start adorning their home as of now.

As per shopping experiences...

Information from one of the UK's greatest retailers uncovers that looking for Christmas keeps on start sooner than expected.

John Lewis' web-based Christmas shop sent off in August for enthusiastic clients, and the interest

has taken off despite an uncommon pre-winter heatwave. Deals of Christmas adornments are up 25% contrasted with this time last year, the retailer uncovers.

Appearance

A significant date in the Christian schedule, Coming is the period before Christmas which praises the introduction of Jesus and is a time of readiness. The event can be set apart with an Approach flame and Coming wreath. Custom directs that Christmas trees ought to be set up toward the start of Approach, which starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. This year, Approach starts on Sunday third December 2023.

1st December

The start of December is a famous decision, with numerous families improving their home to visit the family toward the beginning of the merriest month to stamp the authority commencement.

It relies upon in the event that you purchase a genuine tree...

In the event that you're purchasing a genuine Christmas tree, the English Christmas Tree Producers Affiliation generally prompt that trees ought not be bought sooner than first December. Why? The tree ought to make do for no less than about a month, however appropriately focusing on the tree (it ought to be dealt with like any plant being brought into a warm, dry environment) could assist it with enduring longer.

As per a few retailers, the second Saturday in December has generally seen a flood of customers purchasing genuine Christmas trees, an occasion formally called 'Bring Your Christmas Tree Home Day'. Research shows deals on the second Saturday of December had multiplied, significantly increased and some of the time even quadrupled contrasted with other shopping days.

12 days prior..

Others might decide to put their designs up 12 days before Christmas, and that implies you'll transform your home into a happy habitation from thirteenth December....You pick!

Wordsearch (Answers)

- HANSEN
- RINGROSE
- RYAN
- MURRAY
- AKI
- EARLS
- FURLONG
- SEXTON
- HENDERSON
- PORTER
- DORIS
- OMAHONEY
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A RANGE OF ISSUES EXPLORED

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Lucan (Dublin West) - Laraghcon, Rokeby, Westmanstown

Reopen Silver Bridge meeting attracts over a hundred

Thank you to all the residents and public representatives from Dublin West and Dublin Mid-West who came to my meeting about reopening Silver / Farmleigh / Guinness Bridge and moving towards a Liffey Valley Park. A Liffey Valley Park could be created by identifying a walking and cycling route, not just across the Silver Bridge, but from St Catherine's Park all the way to Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge.



Speaking at the meeting were myself, Dr Paul Corcoran of the Rebuild Silver Bridge Campaign and Joe Byrne of the Liffey Valley Park Alliance. I sincerely hope people will support this campaign for what could be a new world-



class green amenity that would open up and protect the Liffey Valley for generations to come. A petition remains open on change.org to 'Reopen Farmleigh Bridge'.

Green Flag for St Catherine's Park and Park Works

Our wonderful local park has recently received a Green Flag. This award is an international benchmark for public green spaces and St Catherine's Park was one of over 30 parks across Dublin to receive the award.

In St Catherine's Park work is ongoing on three newly constructed tennis courts. The base is now in and the tarmac and fencing will follow.

On the stone buildings, conservation work continues repairing old walls and wall plates. Fingal County Council also hopes to complete some roofing. There may be scope to then move the Urban Market to this location.

Lucan Public Meeting with Cllr. Siobhan Shovlin

Thanks to the residents of Laraghcon and Rokeby who came to our meeting in Kenny's of Lucan. We will work to ensure the needs of residents are represented in Fingal County Council and the Oireachtas.



At official launch of Westmanstown Gael's new Ball Wall with Cllr Siobhan Shovlin



With Owner Niall Hickey and Local Area Rep Caroline Brady

New Co-Working Space on Main Street, Lucan

I was honoured to officially open 'The Dispensary', a co-working space housed in a 200-year-old building in the heart of Lucan Village. It has been lovingly restored and features a virtual office and hot desks for hire. It's a magnificent addition to the area giving people the opportunity to work close to home alongside other professionals. It's fantastic to see the Main Street continue to go from strength to strength.




Laraghcon Hill

I am glad to say Fingal County Council has cleaned up the fences and removed the weeds on Laraghcon Hill after I raised this with them. Three potholes on Laraghcon Hill/Clonee Road, between Laraghcon and Rokeby estates will be fixed when the schedule for road remediation works is agreed.



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MY RECENT WORK ON THE GROUND & IN THE COMMUNITY

ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC REALM

Working in support..



Arthur Griffith Park / Griffeen Valley Park – Tree Pruning

Extensive tree pruning maintenance works were undertaken earlier this year. This followed multiple representations and follow-ups I made on behalf of residents.

Play Space Upgrades

Helped to secure play space upgrades for Castlegate Park – Resurfacing works planned with wider upgrades considered in Council Budget 2024.

New Bins in Adamstown

Several new bins have been installed with more planned! I continue to work alongside residents to identify further locations needed.

Keeping Lucan Clean

Delighted to continue helping out with the selfless work of several local voluntary groups with litter free initiatives.

Illegal Dumping

The Council are currently developing a 'Code of Practice' in relation to CCTV as part of the Circular Economy Programme and I have been working with officials identifying problem black spots in our community.

Bulky Waste Service

Leading renewed call for the reinstatement of the Council household bulky waste collection.

COMMUNITY, EQUALITY & EMPLOYMENT

Listening & Taking Action..



Childcare

Sinn Féin continue to call on Government and advocate for far greater investment to deliver far better accessible and affordable childcare spaces. Working locally, I have supported creche operators desperately trying to secure permanent tenancies, and I have had several motions tabled both highlighting and in support of improvement to services in Lucan.

Disability

Agreement by the Council to my call to examine and since make improvements to their digital services for members of the Deaf Community using online services and through enhanced use of Irish Sign Language.

Club Space

Continue to press upon planners to recognise the rapid need for additional community floor space to accommodate new local club demand.

Emergency Workers

Proud to have supported the National Retained Firefighters Association for better pay, decent work-life balance and agreed time off. My motion was unanimously agreed at the July Council meeting.

Life Saving Equipment

Supported in my calls highlighting the benefit of a national comprehensive database of all AED's and systemic maintenance checks of all devices.

Valuing Council Workers

Stood in solidarity with staff in the recent successful industrial action for 'job evaluation' – the Sinn Féin group led calls at the September Council meeting in support, and I wrote to the Minister, Council Management and the Local Government Management Agency calling for constructive engagement.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Working locally to build resilience..



Building Biodiversity

Griffen Park - Attended the official opening of the new 'Wetlands' in Griffen Valley Park - since seeking specific improvements here, whilst continuing to advocate for expansion and further initiatives.

Sequestering Carbon

Reforestation in Ireland is crucial – I am campaigning for sites for Mini-Woodlands or 'Stepping Stones' forests to be identified in Lucan.

Active Travel Routes

Whilst Lucan is seeing some good connections via the Cycle South Dublin Programme, including the Canal Loop Project due to commence construction in early 2024, I believe there are further connectivity opportunities for better walking and cycling routes.

Climate Change Action Plan

Made a detailed submission to the draft CCAP 2024-2029

Public Transport

Several meetings with the NTA (with representatives from Dublin Bus and Iarnród Éireann present) raising concerns over bus service deficits felt by commuters in Dodsboro, Woodview, Hillcrest, Airlie and Woodview Heights. Separately, I have called for increased train capacity to meet ever increasing commuter expectations and the urgent need for Kishogue Station to finally open!

HOUSING/HEALTH & SERVICES

Providing on the ground..



Housing Crisis

Sinn Féin in Government are committed to delivering 21,000 social and affordable homes in the first year alone - fully costed in our Alternative Budget 2024. I work closely with my constituency colleague and Spokesperson on Housing, Eoin Ó Broin TD assisting on behalf of the people of Lucan.

Planning

A member of the Land Use, Planning and Transport (LUPT) Special Policy Committee, I make frequent contributions to important local planning matters concerning Lucan.

Local Health Care

I have had letters and motions to the Minister for Health highlighting the absence of basic healthcare facilities in Lucan. The HSE continue in negotiations with the developer to secure No 1 Adamstown Boulevard as a primary care centre.

Education

The delivery of schools to meet ever growing population in Lucan is not being met in real time. I continue to raise this at every opportunity.

Mental Health

Access to child and adult mental health services (CAMHS) is at an unacceptable level. My colleague Mark Ward TD is the Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Mental Health. In Government, we will invest an additional €75m in the provision of services.

SAFER COMMUNITY

Supporting one another..



Crime

As a member of the Joint Policing Committee, I attend countywide quarterly meetings. These meetings provide a forum for Council officials, Councillors and An Garda Síochana to work collaboratively to address and improve policing operations and develop strategic approaches.

Plans

Made a detailed submission to the 2023 Policing Plan and a member of local Community Safety Forum.

Community

Continue to support an extension of Garda bike patrols and greater community policing presence and local engagement.

Road Safety

Routinely raising matters of local road traffic management and safety concerns in Lucan, at the bi-monthly Traffic Management Meetings

Nitrous Oxide Misuse

Continually highlighting illegal sale & misuse. Last year, the Council conducted a 12-month pilot-mapping exercise to record locations of discarded cannisters in response to a motion I had agreed - Working closely with my colleague Mark Ward TD, he has submitted legislation to the Bills Office for strict regulations on the sale of this product.



Why do trees lose their leaves?

It's that time of year when we are endlessly picking up leaves in our gardens. Why does this happen?

In Autumn, loads of plants (particularly trees) discard their leaves. These are perfect for hopping in, however for what reason do plants do this? It appears to be a waste. However, by dropping their leaves they are saving their supplements for the following summer. For plants to develop, they need daylight, supplements, and water. The supplements and water come from the dirt. The daylight is caught by the leaves.

To catch the daylight, the leaves utilize a compound called chlorophyll, which makes leaves green. Chlorophyll transforms daylight into food, which the trees need to develop, through a cycle called photosynthesis. In summer, plants do loads of photosynthesis, since they get bunches of light and on the ground that it is warm.

The food they make is sugar, which they use to develop new leaves, blossoms, and seeds.

In winter, things are less agreeable. The days get more limited, it gets colder and there is less daylight. As far as you might be concerned, this isn't an issue - on the off chance that you are cold, you can put a coat on. Be that as it may, plants can't do this. Furthermore, when it gets truly cold, and freezes, their leaves can be harmed.

To see how freezing treats various leaves, there is an examination you can attempt at home. Take a few distinct leaves and put them in your cooler, or the refrigerator in your ice chest. Pass on them for a day to get truly cool, then take them out once more. Put them on a plate so you don't make a wreck, then, at that point, simply hang tight for them to heat up (this will take some time).



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Kildare's Digital Champions



Showcasing Businesses in Kildare who are harnessing Digitalization and Technology

Kildare County Council's Enterprise Office celebrated the Digital Champion awards 2023 on Tuesday the 24th of October. The event took place in the Osprey Hotel with guest speakers Joan Mulvihill; Digitalisation and Sustainability Lead for Siemens in Ireland and Alan McCormack; founder of Carve On, Made Personal and SWAG.eu.

A judging panel with expertise in digital strategy and export development were in awe with the volume of applicants that demonstrated best practice across all 4 categories:

- Export Champion
- Digitisation Champion
- The People's Champion for best e-commerce experience
- Overall Digital Champion

Sonya Kavanagh, Chief Executive of Kildare County Council said,

“When the pandemic swept across the globe, the need to digitalise operations took on an unprecedented intensity. And it hasn't let up since. As local Authority, these awards affirm our commitment to help our businesses keep up with the latest developments by bringing more small businesses into the digital economy, we help them grow, trade, and become resilient. Kildare's digital champions was created to recognise the achievements of Kildare's business community in their adoption of new technologies and digital transformation, but also to encourage those who have not yet taken the leap on their own digital journey.”

The Overall Digital Champion 2023 award winner was

Vanessa Liston of Aphelion Limited T/A CiviQ, a business that provides software and methods for innovations in open public consultation and public opinion analysis for local governments, the public sector, and industry. Aphelion Limited T/A CiviQ made huge commitment to research and development in their infancy, creating and implementing a digital solution which supports counties, cities and government across the world today.

Kildare's Digitisation Champion award went to Deirdre O'Keeffe of Premier Accounts Assist Limited T/A Burdy. Burdy offers a professional, efficient and cost-effective bookkeeping and payroll service for businesses based nationwide. Judges were impressed by her commitment to support and lead small business owners to do the same.

GastroLife Limited, led by Melissa Dooley was named Kildare's Export Champion. GastroLife is a gastrointestinal testing centre for patients with functional gut symptoms. They provide services in 3 clinic locations; Beacon Consultants Clinic, Sandyford; Vista Primary Care, Naas; and in the Bon Secours Hospital, Galway. They also provide services globally via easy to order home testing kits. Biolife impressed the judges for being innovative, given the challenges the healthcare sector faces regarding resources and showing potential to scale up and continue its export growth.

The People's Champion for best e-commerce experience served up more than one winner, with two businesses tying for joint-first position on the

day. Faerly and Siog Botanicals. This award was picked by a public vote; however, the public gave Kildare's LEO an unexpected twist when they inadvertently landed the category in a tie! The commitment to sustainability and providing the best-in-class E-commerce experience to their customers is why these two businesses were the clear winners of this category.

A special recognition category award for Customer Loyalty Champion was awarded to Biofield with Niamh and the E-commerce Start-up Champion award went to Magnetic Mobility.

Jacqui McNaab, Head of Enterprise, Kildare Local Enterprise Office added, "The objective of our Digital for Business initiative is to facilitate strategic intervention for companies to work with third party consultants to assess their digital maturity and highlight where there is room for improvement. The output of this engagement is a strategic, digital roadmap for your business."

"If this is not a support that you have availed of, please ensure that you get in touch. Another opportunity we are keen to share with you is that Kildare Local Enterprise Office has this year become a regional hub for Enterprise Europe Network – a digital portal to facilitate lead generation into export markets."

Each winner received investment into their business, a custom-made trophy and consultancy support to further enhance their digital export strategy for 2024.



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Public representatives welcomes Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use's recommendations



People Before Profit TD for Dublin Midwest Gino Kenny and Cllr Madeleine Johansson have welcomed the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use which has recommended that the state look at a policy change in favour of a health led approach when it comes to drug use.

The Citizen's Assembly concluded last weekend with votes by the members on various recommendations.

Gino Kenny TD said: "I want to welcome these progressive recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use. The recommendation that Ireland should change the status quo when it comes to drug use is progressive. While the recommendation does not explicitly state support for decriminalisation it is clear that the majority of people voted for alternative measures to criminalisation of drug use. It is a clear message to the government to change course in relation to six decades of the failed policy of criminalisation.

"It is now imperative that the government legislates for these recommendations as quickly as possible. This is a once in a generation opportunity that must

be grasped in order to save lives and to chart a different course in drugs policy in this country. A large number of Assembly members also voted for the legalisation and regulation of Cannabis; this is something that could be very easily done by legislation."

Cllr Madeleine Johansson added: "In my role as a councillor I sit on the board of the Clondalkin Drugs and Alcohol Task Force, and I was delighted to see a recommendation from the Citizens' Assembly to increase investment into prevention and education. Local drugs projects work tirelessly with very little funding to provide services for people in addiction and recovery. They also provide education and prevention services in schools and communities. It's time for the government to recognise this work and increase core funding for these services immediately."

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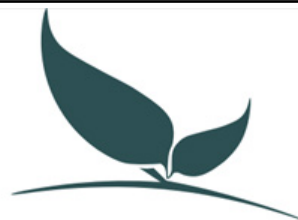
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Retention of three electricity credits will provide comfort this winter – Emer Higgins



Additional €450 credits will put money back into householders' pockets

Budget 2024's retention of the three electricity credits will be welcome news in all households in Dublin Midwest, a Fine Gael TD has said.

"Given that we had seen wholesale electricity prices drop over the past number of months, there was some concern that these credits would not be retained in Budget 2024. Even factoring in recent wholesale price drops, they remain higher than pre-pandemic levels and electricity prices in Ireland remain among the highest in Europe," Deputy Higgins said.

"When we take into account the volatility of conflicts in Ukraine and Israel, we cannot predict how that may also impact on energy prices. We are a small open economy and are vulnerable to external shocks from abroad and policy shifts at home.

"That is why these three combined electricity credits of €450 remain so valuable to

householders. For the coming Winter season when our need to use electricity increases, we know we can rely on these significant credits, which will come directly off our bills. People know how it works now and the sense of security it gives," Deputy Higgins added.

In addition, the VAT rate on electricity and gas is to remain at just 9% until November 2024 and those who qualify for Fuel Allowance will be getting a €300 lump sum.

"Fine Gael is committed to putting more money in people's pockets by cutting tax and USC. This is the tenth Budget in a row this has happened to reward work and help people keep more of their hard-earned wages.

"Under Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, we are building stronger safer communities, ensuring the best start for every child and delivering for rural Ireland and farmers," Deputy Higgins concluded.



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KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL URGES PEDESTRIANS TO STAY SAFE THIS WINTER



Shining a light on pedestrian visibility in Kildare

The clocks have gone back an hour. Kildare County Council is appealing to pedestrians to be more visible to others while using the road. This time of year, we experience dark mornings and longer dark evenings, which bring additional hazards to road users.

A simple garment such as a high visibility vest or an armband could be a lifesaver when it comes to making yourself visible on the roads. The main purpose of a high-viz vest is to make the wearer stand out from the background so they can be seen more easily, particularly by drivers or other road users. Hi-Viz vests are effective in any light or weather conditions.

Cyclists are also urged to be clearly visible to road users by wearing high visibility clothing such as Hi-Viz vests and reflective armbands in addition to the front and rear lights on their bike.

Analysis released from the RSA reports that 43

pedestrians were killed on Irish Roads in 2022. Of the 43 pedestrians killed, 15 occurred between 4pm and 8pm, and 8 between midnight and 4am. Last year, 10 pedestrian fatalities occurred in the month of November.

Initial figures from An Garda Síochána show there have been 38 pedestrian deaths on Irish roads so far this year. The highest in 15 years.

Kildare County Council's Road Safety Officer Declan Keogh said: "Wearing a Hi-Viz vest not only greatly increases your visibility, but it is also a lifesaver. Many of us walk the roads for exercise or leisure, or even just on the way to and from work or school, and with the limited daylight hours from November, we all need to ensure we are making ourselves as safe and as visible as possible, and a simple thing as a Hi-Viz vest is the ideal solution."

As the winter months bring harsher weather conditions and less daylight, Kildare County Council are asking all road users to be safe and to be seen.

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BUDGET 2024 RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF CARERS IN OUR SOCIETY – EMER HIGGINS



Budget 2024 is putting money back in carers' pockets

Budget 2024 is highlighting the important role played by family carers with an increase in payments and other commitments made by the Department of Social Protection, said a Fine Gael TD.

Deputy Emer Higgins said that Budget 2024 emphasised Fine Gael's commitment to supporting fulltime carers.

"Carers will receive an increase in payments as part of the largest social protection budget package in the history of the State.

"There will be a lump sum payment of €400 to all carers receiving the Carer's Support Grant in November 2023, which will help carers who have been struggling with the cost of living.

"Budget 2024 also includes a €12 increase in Carer's Allowance and an increase of €10 to the Domiciliary Care Allowance, which supports carers for children with a severe disability.

"There will also be a Christmas bonus and a second cost of living payment in January that carers can avail of.

"However, the most significant change is that the income threshold for Carer's Allowance has been increased to €450 for a single person and €900 for a couple. This is the second time the Carer's Means Test has been expanded since Minister Humphreys was appointed and it will mean thousands more carers in Dublin Midwest will now qualify for the full payment.

"We are not only providing more funding, but Minister Humphreys also proposed establishing an Interdepartmental Working Group with the Department of Health to examine and review the entire system of means testing for carers payments. I personally hope this is the first step towards the future abolishment of the means test and a basic income for full-time carers.

"Fine Gael is committed to putting more money in people's pockets by cutting tax and USC. This is the tenth Budget in a row this has happened to reward work and help people keep more of their hard-earned wages. Carers across Dublin Midwest will feel the benefit of this.

"Under Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, we are building stronger safer communities, ensuring the best start for every child, and delivering for rural Ireland and farmers.

"Minister Humphreys is also working to deliver a pension for long term carers for the first time, which is a very significant step and underscores Fine Gael's commitment to supporting carers and appreciating their hard work", Deputy Higgins concluded.

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David Hegarty,
Founder and Principal of Common Sense
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In a number between zero and 10, zero being of no interest, ten being of intense interest, mark how much each quality means to you.

When you go to do this, get a spot where you've no interruption, no interference. Speak your mind.

- Peace of mind?
- Less worry?
- Personal contentment?
- Less money worries?
- Self sufficiency?
- To discover your purpose?
- To understand your potential?
- To find your potential?
- To be able to do something about it?
- To think well of yourself?
- To have the courage of your beliefs?
- To discover your meaning in life?
- To find meaning for your life?
- Good health?
- A fit toned body?
- Good sleeping habits?
- A quiet confidence?
- A sense of purpose?
- A sustaining belief?
- A believable aim?
- To pursue a personal ambition?

- To be fulfilled?
- To create your own fulfillment?
- To start doing that?
- CAN you do anything about it?
- Do you believe that?
- Other?

If you feel you'd like to get clear about this, in confidence, send me an email, or text.

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70,000 STUDENTS IN LINE FOR INCREASES IN STUDENT GRANTS INCLUDING 14,893 IN COUNTY DUBLIN – DEPUTY HIGGINS

Budget 2024 puts money back in the pockets of families and students.



Deputy Emer Higgins has confirmed that at least 70,000 students, including 14,893 in Dublin are in line to benefit from student maintenance grant increases thanks to Budget 2024.

Budget 2024 has a significant number of measures that will reduce the cost of education and the cost of living for families and students including:

- significant increases in student grants

- cuts to the student contribution fee for undergraduate students
- increased and extended renters' tax credit
- extended public transport fare discounts for young people

Deputy Higgins said: "This Budget is about putting money into people's pockets, and we know the cost of college is a huge burden for families, especially if they have two children in college."

Fine Gael Deputy Higgins added “The Minister for Further and Higher Education Simon Harris has put forward a package of budget measures that will cut the cost of college for families.

“This includes better grants, reduced college fees and an extension of the rent tax credit. This is Fine Gael ensuring the best start for every young person, while ensuring people get to keep their hard-earned money.”

Budget 2024 made a series of changes for students in college.

Fine Gael Deputy Higgins added: “The SUSI maintenance grant which is the main support for students attending higher education will increase by €342 in this academic year between January and May.

“This means that close to 14,893 students in Dublin are in line for an increase in their student grants which will be welcome news to them and their families.”

“There are also a number of significant reductions in the fee a student pays.

“Eligible undergraduate students will also receive for a second year in a row a €1000 reduction in the student contribution fee.

“On top of this and in recognition of the cost of living, people with a household income of below €100,000 will

see their fees halved as they will not only get €1000 off but will also get the €500 student contribution grant from SUSI.

“And if SUSI was paying half your fee, you’ll get another €500 off meaning your fee will be €1,000.

“Parents of students will also be glad to hear that the renter’s tax credit has been increased to €750 next year.

“Not only is the credit being increased but it’s being extended. Indeed, parents who pay for their child’s digs accommodation will be able to apply for the renter’s tax credit retrospectively for the years 2022 and 2023 where both credits were worth €500 each.

“Public transport’ half-price fares are also being extended to people up to their 26th birthday, making the cost of commuting to and from university for instance is much cheaper for our young people.

Deputy Higgins concluded “With the strong economy Fine Gael has built in Government, we will continue to reduce the cost of getting an education and help support families putting their kids through third level education. Minister Harris has delivered a Budget which supports families and ensures more money is back in their pocket.”

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