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DEC 2023

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Sinn Féin

Cllr Derren Ó Brádaigh

Representing Lucan - Palmerstown - Nth Clondalkin - Balgaddy - Fonthill

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the December edition of Little Village. We wish all our readers a Happy Christmas. This edition has a Christmas theme.

With all that is going on in the world we can only wish for a more peaceful and kind 2024.

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

On behalf of the team at Little Village we wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a great 2024.

Kind Regards, Little Village



Ronan Bright
Director / Head of Sales
brightronan83@gmail.com
085 199 8321



Patrick Browne
Graphic Design
hello@patrickbrowndesign.com
086 831 9322

LITTLE VILLAGE MAGAZINE

All correspondence should be addressed to:

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Local representatives welcome review of Lucan buses but say more is needed

People Before Profit TD for Dublin Midwest Gino Kenny and Councillor Madeleine Johansson have welcomed a review of the C1 and C2 bus services in Lucan.



The representatives made the comments following a meeting with the NTA to discuss a number of issues with bus services in the Lucan area. They were informed that the NTA are currently waiting for a proposal from Dublin Bus regarding the C1 and C2 routes. Both representatives reported having been contacted by residents about issues with capacity on the C1 and C2, particularly at peak times.

Gino Kenny commented: "I welcome the review of the C1 and C2 routes. It's clear to me that we need more buses on these routes, particularly at peak times and in the early mornings. We have also asked the NTA to look at providing additional services on the P29 route in the morning time. There is a growing population in the wider Lucan area and people want to use public transport instead of private cars, but this is very difficult when you can't get on a bus or when buses don't show up.

"We also raised the need for an additional train in

the morning from Adamstown to Dublin City Centre, but we were informed that not enough funding had been allocated to provide this. I will be contacting the Minister for Transport about this to request additional funding for an extra train."

Cllr Madeleine Johansson added: "People are contacting us all the time because of problems with the buses. The buses from Lucan to the city centre are full to capacity, particularly at peak times and on Saturdays.

"The problem of 'ghost buses' has also been reported numerous times, which is when buses that are scheduled don't show up at all. Sometimes people have been left waiting an hour for the next bus. We raised this with the NTA, and they said that they are aware of this still happening but hoping that the situation will improve with increased recruitment of drivers.

"I welcome that the C1 and C2 routes are being reviewed and I hope that they will be able to put on extra buses as soon as possible."

YOUR INDEPENDENT COUNCILLOR #teamotoole

Liona O'TOOLE

**Peace
Commissioner**

**Independent
Councillor
for Lucan**



Get in touch:



@LOTooleLucan



CllrLionaOToole

Mobile

087 279 5274

Email

lotoole@cllrs.sdublincoco.ie

Web

www.lionaotoole.com

Safety Initiatives for Lucan: Strengthening Our Community Together

As Lucan experiences continuous growth, with new developments welcoming residents daily, the need for an enhanced community safety infrastructure becomes more apparent. Recognizing this, I have continuously initiated efforts to establish a new community safety forum in our area, striving to address the unique challenges posed by a growing population, a diverse community, and the coexistence of both young and aging populations.

Lucan, with its dynamic blend of residents, demands innovative solutions to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone. Traditional approaches may fall short in meeting the diverse needs of our community. Hence, it is crucial to think outside the box and embrace creative initiatives that

cater to the multifaceted nature of Lucan's population.

One of my significant efforts has been advocating for the establishment of satellite police stations. The response from our local Gardai leadership, including the Superintendent and Chief Superintendent has been promising. They are actively exploring the feasibility of introducing a satellite station, especially in the upcoming district centre in Adamstown. This strategic move would not only enhance the presence of Gardai but also create a focal point for community engagement and collaboration. With new units being built in the Adamstown district centre and with the development of Clonburris SDZ in the horizon, the pressing need for a new Garda station in Clonburris, as a potential for a centralized location for the Gardai is essential. A new Garda station in Clonburris would not only bolster safety measures but also provide a sense of security for both existing and future residents.

The establishment of a community safety forum plays a pivotal role in this endeavour. It serves as a platform for residents, Gardai, and local authorities to collaborate, share insights, and collectively work towards a safer Lucan. This forum will be instrumental in addressing concerns specific to our community, tailoring safety initiatives to our unique needs.

Lucan's growth is a testament to its appeal, but with growth comes responsibility. It is imperative that we proactively address safety concerns to ensure Lucan remains a thriving and secure community. Through the community safety forum, we aim to foster a sense of shared responsibility, where each resident contributes to the safety and well-being of the entire community.

As we navigate through the complexities of a diverse, expanding community, it is heartening to see the commitment of our Gardai in exploring innovative solutions. The potential introduction of satellite stations and the investigations into a new Garda station underscore a shared dedication to ensuring Lucan's safety.

I recently engaged in a discussion with Commissioner Drew Harris, addressing these initiatives. As a member of the Joint Policing Committee, this platform allowed me to emphasize our commitment to fostering a safe and thriving environment for all residents. It is encouraging to witness this collaborative effort aimed at tackling the unique challenges our community faces. This discussion provided me with a valuable opportunity to bring these concerns to the forefront. The spotlight is now on us, and together, we can generate positive ripples that will resonate for years to come.

In conclusion, the journey to establish a new community safety forum in Lucan is a collaborative effort aimed at creating a safer and more secure environment for all residents. By thinking creatively, advocating for satellite stations, a community safety forum, and pushing for a new Garda station in Clonburris, we are laying the groundwork for a resilient and responsive safety infrastructure. As we embrace these initiatives, let us continue working together to make Lucan a model community where safety is a shared priority.

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any concerns you may have in your area.

Have you had calls from someone saying they missed your call, and you never phoned them? Your phone number may have been ‘spoofed’.

Mobile Phone Spoofing: Understanding the Threat and Protecting Yourself



Introduction:

In today's digital age, mobile phones have become an integral part of our lives. They not only serve as a means of communication but also store a treasure trove of personal and sensitive information. Unfortunately, the rise of mobile phone spoofing poses a significant threat to our privacy and security. This article aims to shed light on the concept of mobile phone spoofing, its implications, and how you can protect yourself from falling victim to such scams.

What is Mobile Phone Spoofing?

Mobile phone spoofing refers to the act of manipulating the caller ID information displayed on a recipient's phone.

In simpler terms, it allows scammers to disguise their phone numbers and make it appear as if they are calling from a legitimate and trustworthy source. This technique is commonly used by fraudsters to deceive individuals into providing sensitive information or engaging in fraudulent activities.

Implications and Risks:

The repercussions of falling victim to mobile phone spoofing can be severe. Scammers often impersonate banks, government agencies, or well-known companies to trick individuals into sharing their personal details, such as Social Security numbers, banking information, or login credentials.

This information can then be used for identity theft, financial fraud, or unauthorized access to online accounts.

Protecting Yourself from Mobile Phone Spoofing:

While it may seem daunting, there are several steps you can take to safeguard yourself against mobile phone spoofing:

1. Be vigilant:

Always be sceptical of unsolicited calls, especially those asking for personal information or financial details. Do not provide sensitive information over the phone unless you initiated the call and are certain about the legitimacy of the recipient.

2. Verify the caller:

If you receive a call from someone claiming to be from a bank, government agency, or any other organization, hang up and independently verify their identity. Use official contact numbers obtained from trusted sources to reach out and confirm the legitimacy of the call.

3. Install call filtering apps:

Consider using call filtering apps that can help identify and block suspected spam or spoofed calls. These apps use databases of known scam numbers to warn you about potential threats.

4. Keep software up to date:

Regularly update your mobile phone's operating system

and security patches. These updates often include fixes for vulnerabilities that scammers may exploit.

5. Enable two-factor authentication:

Whenever possible, enable two-factor authentication for your online accounts. This adds an extra layer of security by requiring a second form of verification, such as a code sent to your mobile device, to access your account.

6. Educate yourself:

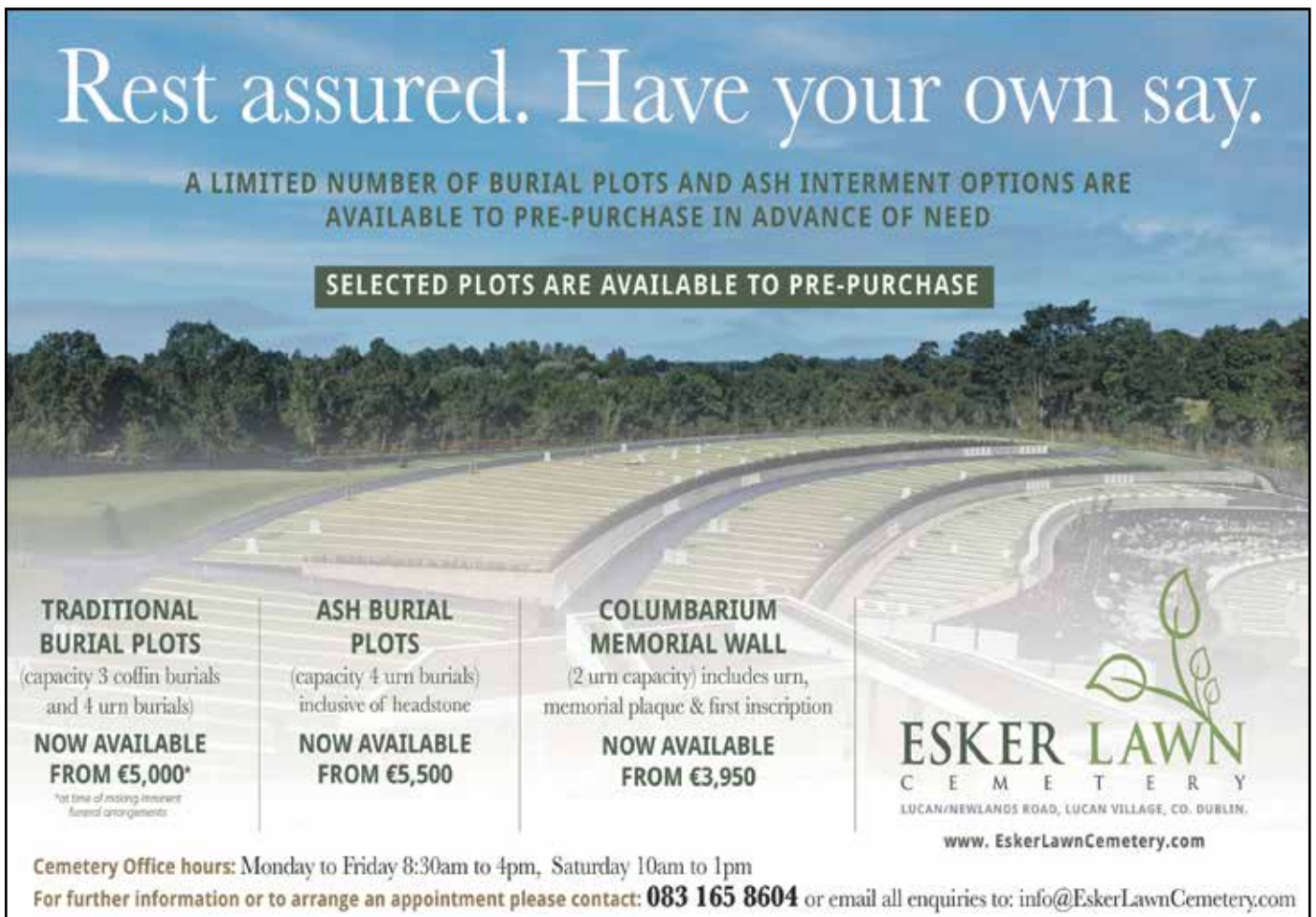
Stay informed about the latest mobile phone spoofing techniques and scams. Learn how to identify red flags and common tactics used by scammers. Knowledge is power when it comes to protecting yourself.

7. If you believe your phone number has been spoofed your mobile provider can do little to help.

Should you receive several calls from people saying you rang them explain that your phone number has probably been spoofed. This is more common for people whose phone number is publicly available. For example, on a website or social media. The best advice is to not answer calls from unrecognised numbers and let people leave a message. If they don't you have no need to reply.

Conclusion:

Mobile phone spoofing has become a prevalent threat in our increasingly connected world. However, with awareness, caution, and the implementation of preventive measures,



Rest assured. Have your own say.

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What have Nutcracker dolls got to do with Christmas?

Nutcracker dolls have become strongly associated with Christmas due to their prominent role in the ballet “The Nutcracker.”



As a result, nutcracker dolls have become popular decorative items during Christmas time, symbolizing the magical and joyful spirit of the season. People often

display nutcracker dolls as part of their holiday decorations, adding a touch of whimsy and nostalgia to their homes.

Nutcracker dolls have become a beloved symbol of Christmas for several reasons.

- Their origins: Nutcracker dolls were originally functional tools used to crack nuts, and they were often given as gifts during the Christmas season. This association with Christmas gifting helped to cement their connection to the holiday. The design of these dolls was inspired by the shape of traditional nutcrackers, which typically consisted of a lever and a hinged mouth that could be opened and closed with the help of a lever. By placing a nut in the mouth of the nutcracker and applying pressure on the lever, one could crack open the shell to access the edible nut inside.

- The Nutcracker ballet: The popularity of the ballet “The Nutcracker” further solidified the nutcracker doll’s association with Christmas. Based on E.T.A. Hoffmann’s story “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King,” the ballet premiered in 1892 and has since become a Christmas tradition for many families. This ballet, composed by Tchaikovsky, tells the story of a young girl named Clara who receives a

nutcracker doll as a Christmas gift. The doll magically comes to life, leading Clara on a journey through a magical land of sweets and adventures.

- Their festive appearance: Nutcracker dolls are typically dressed in elaborate, military-style uniforms, which adds to their festive appeal. Their traditional red and gold colours also align with the Christmas colour scheme. Today, nutcracker dolls are primarily associated with their decorative and symbolic value rather than their original functional purpose.

- Their symbolic meaning: In German folklore, nutcracker dolls are believed to bring good luck and protect homes from evil spirits. This symbolic meaning has further endeared them to Christmas celebrants.

As a result of these factors, nutcracker dolls have become a ubiquitous symbol of Christmas. They are often displayed as decorations in homes and businesses, and they are also popular gifts during the holiday season. So now you know!



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Most of us are still putting waste into wrong bin, says EPA

The majority of households and businesses in Ireland are putting their waste into the wrong bin, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.



It has called on local authorities to enforce the roll-out of the three-bin system - compost, recycling, general waste - and educate people on the importance of segregating waste.

David Pollard, Programme Manager of the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement has said two thirds of the waste that goes into the general waste bin should not go into it, but should be put into the recycling or organic bins.

He said around two million tonnes of municipal waste is produced every year and two thirds of that "doesn't need to be there".

"The critical issue with waste is the segregation of our waste because if we don't segregate our waste, we fail to recycle. If we don't recycle, more of our waste goes into landfill and incinerators. So, it's absolutely critical that people segregate their waste," he said.

Mr Pollard said the role of local authorities in protecting the environment is "absolutely crucial".

These are the people on the ground, who are closest to what is happening, he said.

These cover waste, water, air and noise pollution, and governance processes.

The EPA said that while combatting illegal waste activities was carried out well by local authorities, household and commercial waste management was the poorest performing area overall.

The EPA wants a greater focus from local authorities on the roll-out of brown bins for organic waste, farm inspections to protect water quality, and a greater clampdown on the sale of smoky fuels.

How can we help? It is difficult to know sometimes which bin to use. Hopefully the REPAK poster published with this article giving a list of what can be recycled will be helpful.

WHAT CAN GO IN MY RECYCLING BIN?

Please place all items in your recycling bin **CLEAN, DRY & LOOSE**



TINS, CANS & FOIL

- Drink Cans
- Food Cans
- Pet Food Cans & Trays
- Soup / Sauce / Fruit Tins
- Gift / Biscuit / Toiletry Tins
- Sweet / Chocolate Tins
- Aluminium (Tin) Foil
- Aluminium Trays
- Beer Bottle Lids
- Metal Jar & Bottle Lids



PAPER & CARDBOARD

- Newspapers
- Books / Phone Books
- Magazines / Catalogues
- Diaries / Calendars
- Letters / Junk Mail
- Egg Boxes
- Sugar Bags / Potato Bags

- Empty Juice / Milk Cartons
- Packaging Boxes
- Food Boxes
- Gravy / Salt Tubs
- Gift Cards / Wrap
- Paper / Envelopes
- Pizza Boxes
- Washing Powder Boxes
- Tissue Boxes
- Toilet / Kitchen Roll Tubes



ALL PLASTICS

- Bread wrappers
- Fruit / veg and salad wraps and bags
- Kitchen / toilet roll outer wrap
- Breakfast cereal bags
- Plastic shopping / carrier bags
- Dried fruit / seed and nut bags
- Frozen food bags
- Pasta / rice / noodle bags
- Cheese packs outer wrap
- Baked goods / Confectionary outer wrappers
- Crisp / cracker wrappers
- Bubble wrap
- Electrical item/white goods / appliances bags/wrap
- Mattress / pillow wrap
- Wet wipes outer wrap
- Detergent/dishwasher bags
- Garden compost / bark bags
- All pots, tubs and trays
- Water / juice Bottles
- Milk / cream Bottles
- Sauce / dressing Bottles
- Meat / veg / bread trays
- Butter/margarine / ice-cream tubs
- Yogurt pots
- Salad / fruit bowls
- Chocolate / biscuit trays
- Bottle / jar lids
- Take-away plastic containers
- Shampoo / liquid soap and gel bottles
- Make-up / toiletry tubs and mouth wash bottles
- Detergent / household cleaning bottles
- Plastic plant pots



VISION IRELAND, THE NEW NAME FOR NCBI, USHERS IN A CHANGE IN SIGHT AFTER A CENTURY OF SERVICE PROVISION

At an event at 58 South William Street, Dublin 2, which was the organisation's first official office in the 1930s, NCBI, the national sight loss agency, changes its name to Vision Ireland, as the true size of the community of people who are blind or vision impaired is revealed.



The name change is designed to be more inclusive, ensuring that everyone knows Vision Ireland supports people with a wide range of visual impairments.

According to census data, published recently, there are more than 296,000 people in Ireland who are blind or have a vision impairment. The name change for the 92-year-old national sight loss agency is designed to reach even more of the 6% of the population, or one in 17 people who are blind or have a vision impairment. The data show that blindness or vision impairment affects 27% of all people experiencing at least one long-lasting condition or difficulty to any extent.

At a special ceremony in Dublin to mark the launch, Chris White, Vision Ireland CEO, said: "Many people with sight issues are missing the opportunity to avail of our services because they are unaware that we support people with different levels of visual impairment. Our new name, Vision

Ireland, is designed to reflect our broad range of support.

"The Vision Ireland name was developed through extensive consultation with staff, service users and volunteers – and they also like how our new name better represents the forward-looking and dynamic organisation that we are.

"Our mission hasn't changed – we will continue as before – and continue to promote good eye health and continue to champion an inclusive society where physical and digital spaces are more accessible for all, regardless of abilities."

Speaking at the launch today, Paul Kelly, Chair of Vision Ireland, said: "As someone with a with a vision impairment that did not access the great services of the NCBI as my family, my doctors and myself all thought it was not for me as I was not fully blind, I am particularly proud to be associated with the great staff and volunteers of Vision

Ireland today as we embark on the next phase of the journey to empower even more blind and visually impaired people in Ireland.”

Messages of support for Vision Ireland poured in from all over the world from RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind) in the UK, Vision Australia, European Blind Union and the World Blind Union among others.

Commenting on the launch of Vision Ireland, Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, outlined how the Government is committed to providing services for people with disabilities so that they can lead independent lives, while acknowledging there is much work to be done.

“With new thinking, new perspectives and pooling ideas, we will do better. And I’m glad that we can call on Vision Ireland’s expertise in developing a barrier free and inclusive society. With the goal of enabling people to live an independent life of their choice, Vision Ireland is making a real difference to the lives of people every day. The dedication of Vision Ireland staff and volunteers is truly commendable,” Mr Varadkar said.

Speaking in support of the launch, Robbie Henshaw, Member of the Board of Trustees of Vision Ireland, said: “I’ve been involved with NCBI for a number of years, and it has been both an honour and a privilege to witness the tremendous impact that it has on people who are blind or have a vision impairment. Their unwavering

commitment to providing essential support and resources has been a beacon of hope for so many people in Ireland. Their dedication to improving the lives of all those they support is truly remarkable, and I am proud to be a part of the next chapter for Vision Ireland.”

Neasa Hourigan, TD, speaking at the launch event said: “Being the parent of a child who has a vision impairment, I have firsthand experience of the challenges and uncertainties that can arise. At every stage, NCBI has been a tremendous help, offering invaluable support and resources that have made a significant difference in our lives.

“The dedication and expertise has given us hope, empowerment, and a brighter future. We are immensely grateful for their unwavering assistance and I would encourage every parent and guardian to avail of Vision Ireland’s support and services,” Ms Hourigan added.

Also speaking at the event was Wicklow native Lar Keogh, who was born the same year NCBI was launched, 92 years ago. “I’ve had vision issues for quite a few years, but I didn’t realise I could avail of the services of NCBI. It’s been a revelation for me since I became a service user and I have been welcomed with open arms by everyone at Vision Ireland. Their support has been fantastic, and it’s really made a big difference in my daily life.”

Wordsearch

(Answers on Next Page)

- PRESENTS
- SPROUTS
- SANTA
- CRACKERS
- MISTLETOE
- DECORATIONS
- TURKEY
- CAROLS
- REINDEER
- PUDDING
- TREE

Christmas Wordsearch

R	E	R	C	D	C	R	P	L	R	D	D	P	C
E	O	T	T	U	R	T	U	T	P	C	E	E	P
S	T	S	A	N	T	A	D	O	R	T	C	T	T
O	E	R	T	E	N	S	D	R	E	E	O	U	E
N	L	T	I	C	S	K	I	E	S	E	R	R	A
R	T	T	T	R	R	N	N	T	E	M	A	K	S
I	S	P	A	R	T	E	G	T	N	C	T	E	D
C	I	D	T	R	E	I	T	I	T	S	I	Y	T
S	M	S	S	E	C	E	D	E	S	L	O	G	I
E	S	U	S	P	R	O	U	T	S	O	N	N	C
D	S	S	R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R	S	R	U
G	R	C	R	A	C	K	E	R	S	A	A	T	E
O	R	P	K	E	R	R	E	E	Y	C	R	R	O

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL TAKES HOME TWO AWARDS AT THE 2023 EXCELLENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS

Kildare County Council takes home two awards at the 2023 Excellence in Local Government Awards, which took place in the Crown Plaza Hotel, Dublin on Thursday 23rd November.



The Excellence in Local Government Awards showcase best practice in local government and recognise the skills, hard work, innovation and enthusiasm within local government that can often go unrecognised.

The Excellence in Local Government Awards were held in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Winning Projects:

Category: Festival of the Year

Project: Brigid 1500 – St Brigid’s Festival 2023

Brigid 1500 is a 2-year programme to celebrate and commemorate St. Brigid; a woman, a life and a legacy. The aim of Brigid 1500 is to create a meaningful cultural and societal legacy that appeals to a diverse contemporary audience. Brigid 1500 engages communities with the

story and heritage of St. Brigid, providing a tangible connection with the past through events and programmes. The programme engages with the values St. Brigid championed, including faith and spirituality, biodiversity and sustainability, arts and culture, social justice, peace, hospitality and education. A 10-day festival took place to celebrate the inaugural St. Brigid’s Bank Holiday, from 28th January to 7th February 2023. This programme was delivered in partnership with a dedicated Brigid 1500 Steering Committee. The celebrations included a school programme and 4 large flagship events alongside various community events delivered via a grant scheme and in collaboration with partner agencies.

Category: Municipal District Initiative

Project: Wellbeing Roadshow

The Wellbeing roadshow by Kildare County Council was a targeted county-wide event hosted in the Kildare/

Newbridge MD. The roadshow took place in the Kilcullen Mart on Tuesday Feb 7th. They partnered with Kildare West Wicklow IFA to bring a community roadshow targeting isolated Farmers in to bring a community roadshow targeting isolated Farmers in Kildare. They made a deliberate decision to hold the event in a local mart to reduce barriers to participation and to ensure a sense of belonging on the day.

They had over 25 information stands from various agencies and services including farmer related services and supports. They had information on:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Rightsizing/age friendly homes
- Education and employment
- Mobility and balance
- Safety and security

They also introduced new Fitsticks for Farmers programme and had Minister Heydon in attendance and Ceann Comhairle speak on his journey with prostate cancer.

Kildare County Council was shortlisted for the following projects at the 20th annual Chambers Ireland Excellence

in Local Government Awards 2023:

- Celbridge as an age friendly Town in Age Friendly Initiative
- Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme in Climate Change
- Get Connected, Stay Connected: Internal Communications Campaign in Communications
- Brigid 1500 St. Brigid's Festival 2023 in Festival of the Year
- Kildare Sports Ability Day 2022 in Health & Wellbeing
- Reimagining the Potato Market in Naas in Heritage and Built Environment
- Wellbeing Roadshow in Municipal District Initiative
- Newbridge Women's shed in Municipal District Initiative
- Connected Hubs - Kildare Hub Network in Promoting Economic Development
- Kildare Library Service Reader in Residence in Supporting Sustainable Communities
- Grass to Gas - Sustainable open space management through fuel generation in Sustainable Environment & Biodiversity
- Kildare's Public Parklets in Urban Revival

Wordsearch (Answers)

- PRESENTS
- SPROUTS
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- CRACKERS
- MISTLETOE
- DECORATIONS
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- CAROLS
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Chara

Originally from Inchicore, I have lived in Lucan for the past 15 years and I am a proud father, grandfather, and a South Dublin County Councillor. I was co-opted onto the Council in 2020 and have represented the Lucan community on the Lucan and Palmerstown-Fonthill area committee.

Previously, I worked as a taxi driver for 19 years and prior to this I worked in logistics Management. I hold a management diploma with the open college. As a member of Sinn Féin for over 10 years, I was the party's Director of Elections for Dublin Mid-West in the successful 2020 general election, and I am currently the constituency organiser.

I am passionate about my local community and have worked with, and in support of local clubs, organisations and resident's groups. I am standing in next June's local election and if elected, I will heighten my focus and energy on the further specific needs of Lucan.

MY PRIORITIES INCLUDE CAMPAIGNING FOR:

- Stronger local representation in the Council
- Better Council services for Lucan
- More affordable and social housing
- Increased school places and childcare services
- Better access to GP, dental and medical services
- Improved quality public transport

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Council

13
Motions Tabled
& Passed

42
Official Questions
Submitted

Local Area Committee

103
Motions Tabled
& Agreed

78
Official Questions
Submitted



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UPCOMING PROJECTS & PROVIDING NEWS UPDATES



Lucan Village Works

Approved enhancement works for Lucan Village include upgrades to the Village Green, the Weir Promenade and entrance to Lucan Desmesne have a revised starting date for late November and are expected to take 12 months to complete.

Airlie Park

Whilst a very welcome and much needed facility, the planned opening in the Summer incurred some seeding and drainage issues – end October opening anticipated. Meanwhile, I continue to press upon the Council for local club priority.

Lucan Pool

Further delays mean the pool has a revised completion date of December in the best-case scenario now. I have relayed the sheer frustration being felt by the local community to Council management, whilst calling for greater accountability on public project works.

Cycle Loop Urban Greenway

Phase 1 of the Grand Canal to Lucan Urban Greenway has been progressing – Phase 1A to the N4 is expected to go into construction in early 2024.

Lucan House

Official confirmation regarding the purchase is eagerly awaited and expected to be announced soon. Potential uses are boundless with lots of local excitement.

Old Lucan Schoolhouse

Although 'head of terms' are agreed toward the purchase of the Old Schoolhouse (opposite Courtney's) in the Village, unexpected delays outside of the control of the Council have resulted in a delay in the timeline for the transaction.

Esker Embankment

Whilst supportive of the Esker Ridge 'proposed' permeability project, this must address all resident concerns through direct consultation. I have echoed this sentiment to Council officials, whilst keeping residents in Moy Glas, Castle Riada and the surrounds up to date with several news leaflet drops over the past 2 years.

Lucan Bridge

The latest response I received (5th Oct) for a commitment toward restoration works, including the removal of vegetation from the bridge stated that a procurement to secure a specialist contractor is underway – sometime in 2024 hopefully!

ATHLETES INVITE KILDARE SCHOOLS TO JOIN 'FITTEST SCHOOL' SEARCH

A search to find Ireland's fittest school in which schools in Kildare are invited to participate has been launched by three of Ireland's best-known athletes, World Para Rowing champion, Katie O'Brien and Olympians, sprinters Phil Healy and David Gillick.



Working in cooperation with banana distributors Fyffes, their aim is to find a school whose focus on fitness will replicate the success of previous 'Ireland's Fittest School' winners – Scoil Na Croise Naofa, Dunfanaghy (2022) and Gilson National School, Oldcastle (2023).

Launched alongside the resumption of this year's Fyffes 'Fit Squad' programme – in which an expected 10,000 young pupils from primary

schools, north and south, will partake in live in-school fitness visits – all three athletes have recorded a series of workouts for viewing online which they hope schools will adopt as part of their PE course.

Running from January to March, the top four schools will then progress to a live 'grand final' hosted by patrons O'Brien, Healy and Gillick at which the prize package will include €8,000 worth of sports equipment. Registration is now open and further details can be found online at www.fyffesfitsquad.ie



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CELBRIDGE GETS MOVING!

New Outdoor Gym Opens in Celbridge



Kildare County Council has opened a new public outdoor exercise area in Celbridge.

Located at Celbridge Abbey Car Park, the gym features a combination of outdoor exercise equipment and calisthenics which allows for free exercise using your own body weight. The range of equipment includes, rower, cross trainer, leg press, dip bars and exercise bars which facilitates a range of exercise for all ages and abilities.

The new outdoor gym in Celbridge not only provides free access to regular physical activity, which is important for physical health. It is hoped that other social integration, accessibility, and many other benefits will be felt from this important community space.

The project cost €50k and was funded by Local Property Tax provided by local Councillors and the Community Recognition Fund. The project also marks the first step in the provision of outdoor facilities for teenagers in Celbridge. Following consultations carried out over the last 18 months, it is planned to deliver more outdoor facilities in the near future.



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Community Incensed at Vandalism of Newly Opened Lucan Parks

Sinn Féin Councillor Derren Ó Brádaigh has expressed his condemnation of sheer wanton vandalism of two newly opened parks in Lucan.



Tandy's Lane Park opened last year and has seen some anti-social behaviour, with the newly opened Airlie Park seeing activity areas daubed in graffiti within 24 hours of opening to the public.

Cllr Ó Brádaigh said.

"This is completely unacceptable. Airlie Park was not even open a day before descended upon the much-needed new local community amenity, was vandalised with graffiti. This new park opening has been long and eagerly awaited, with numerous members of the local surrounding community contacting me over recent months in excitement, and with queries regarding the excellent facilities the park has to offer. Indeed, so many clubs have been in contact, all interested in using the park and its all-weather pitch facilities on offer.

"The new park was due to open in early summer; however, this was delayed due to some initial seeding problems, followed by some drainage issues. So, when word finally came that the park would see a 'soft' opening ahead of an actual official opening date yet to be announced, this news was warmly received and welcomed by all.

Cllr Ó Brádaigh said.

"Increasingly, we are witnessing some of our parks being overtaken by a minority bent on destruction and anti-social behaviour. Graffiti 'tagging' is also becoming a huge issue throughout our neighbourhoods, costing our local authority important financial resources needed elsewhere. Some of our parks are being used after dark for drug abuse, illegal fires, and general nuisance behaviour. We cannot allow a situation whereby our park facilities are overrun by certain individuals that have nothing to offer the community, and somehow feel their assaults on our communities will go unpunished.

"Following this recent spate of graffiti daubing within both Airlie Park and on seating and benches in Tandy's Lane Park, I have raised this matter with An Garda Síochána and have written to Lucan Garda Station. They have passed this onto their community policing section and are committed to increasing Garda visibility in the vicinity now. As a member of the Joint Policing Committee, I will also be raising the matter. This type of senseless activity needs to be confronted and we must stand together in support of our communities and each other!"

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Opportunity Knocks: Kildare - Lexington Student Exchange Programme returns for 2024



County Kildare has been twinned with Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A. since 1984.

Lexington is a charming city of about 300,000 population. One of the most successful aspects of Kildare's twinning with Lexington has been the annual student exchange, which affords Kildare students the opportunity to spend time in Lexington and to welcome a student into their home in return.

Kildare County Council's successful student exchange programme will take place again in 2024, and we are now inviting parents/guardians of interested students to apply. To start the application process, visit <https://submit.link/29R>

The closing date for applications is Friday 12th January 2024.

The exchange takes place during the summer holidays with students, from the age of 16, from several schools around Kildare taking part each year.



In 2024, it is proposed that 10 Kildare students will travel to Lexington on 28th June, accompanied by an adult chaperone and return on 8th July 2024. The U.S. students will arrive in Kildare on 12th July and depart on 22nd July 2024.

For more information email; kildarestudentexchange@kildarecoco.ie

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ARE AIR FRYERS ANY GOOD?

If you don't already have one an air fryer might well be on your Christmas list. What are the benefits of an air fryer?



Air fryers are a popular kitchen appliance that uses hot air to cook food. They are often touted as a healthier alternative to deep frying, as they use less oil. Additionally, air fryers are said to cook food more quickly and evenly than traditional ovens.

Pros of Air Fryers:

- **Healthier cooking:** Air fryers use less oil than deep fryers, which can reduce your intake of unhealthy fats.
- **Faster cooking:** Air fryers cook food more quickly than traditional ovens.
- **Even cooking:** Air fryers cook food evenly, resulting in crispy and evenly cooked food.
- **Versatility:** Air fryers can be used to cook a variety of foods, including chicken, fish, vegetables, and even desserts.
- **Easy to use:** Air fryers are relatively easy to use, making them a great option for busy cooks.

Cons of Air Fryers:

- **Cost:** Air fryers can be more expensive than traditional ovens.
 - **Size:** Air fryers can be bulky and take up countertop space.
 - **Capacity:** Air fryers have a smaller capacity than traditional ovens, so they may not be suitable for cooking large families.
 - **Cleaning:** Air fryers can be difficult to clean.
- Overall, air fryers are a versatile and convenient kitchen appliance that can be a healthy alternative to deep frying. However, they are not without their drawbacks, such as their cost, size, and capacity. If you are considering buying an air fryer, it is important to weigh the pros and cons to decide if it is right for you.

If you have an air fryer, or acquire one before Christmas, try our Air-fryer brussels sprouts menu featured in this edition. You might even get the kids to like them!

AIR FRYER BRUSSEL SPROUTS RECIPE

Cook sprouts in an air fryer for a super-easy cooking method, then add flavourings of your choice, such as chilli or chopped crispy bacon.



Ingredients

- 350g fresh brussels sprouts, or 250g frozen
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- chopped cooked bacon, chilli flakes or chopped roasted hazelnuts, to serve (optional)

Method

• STEP 1

Heat the air fryer to 180C. If using fresh sprouts, trim them, then tip in a bowl. Add the bacon and chilli flakes. Drizzle over the oil, season well and toss to coat. Arrange the sprouts in the air-fryer basket in a single layer and cook for 10-15, tossing halfway through.

• STEP 2

If cooking from frozen, tip the frozen sprouts into the air-fryer basket and cook for 10-15 mins, depending on how golden you like them. Remove, then tip onto a serving plate and scatter with any of the suggested toppings, if you like.

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Coping with Christmas: A Guide for Parents of Young Children

By Rachael Smith Certified Personal & Business Coach



As a life coach and primary school teacher, I understand the whirlwind that the holiday season can become, especially for parents of young children. Christmas is a time of joy, celebration, and family togetherness, but it can also bring about stress and chaos if not managed thoughtfully. Let's dive into some effective techniques that can help you plan, prioritise, and cherish the moments with your family during this festive season.



1. Mindful Planning: Start by creating a flexible plan for the holiday season. Break down tasks into manageable steps and delegate responsibilities among family members. Set realistic expectations and understand that not everything has to be perfect. Embrace the imperfect beauty of the season.

2. Prioritise Family Activities: Identify what truly matters to your family during Christmas. Whether it's decorating the tree, baking cookies, or watching holiday movies, prioritise activities that bring joy and

create lasting memories. Allocate time for these activities and involve your children in the planning process to foster excitement and anticipation.

3. Balancing Activities and Downtime: While it's tempting to fill every moment with festive events, remember the importance of downtime. Plan moments to unwind, relax, and cherish the simple joys of the season. This could be snuggling up with a book, playing board games, or taking a stroll to admire neighbourhood decorations. Such moments

not only rejuvenate everyone but also nurture a sense of togetherness.

4. Communication and Flexibility: Open communication within the family is crucial. Discuss plans, listen to each other's preferences, and be open to adjustments. Flexibility allows for spontaneity and the ability to adapt to unexpected changes, fostering an stress-free environment.

5. Simplify and Delegate: Simplify your holiday commitments by learning to say 'no' graciously. Delegate tasks and involve everyone in preparations. Let children participate according to their abilities, fostering a sense of responsibility and accomplishment.

6. Self-Care: As parents, it's easy to overlook self-care during the holiday rush. However, taking care of yourself is vital. Schedule moments for self-care, whether it's a quiet cup of tea, a walk in nature, or a few minutes of meditation. When you're rejuvenated, you can give more to your family.

Remember, the essence of Christmas lies in spending quality time with loved ones. Embrace imperfections, cherish the laughter, and savour the small, precious moments. By planning mindfully, prioritising family activities, balancing schedules, and allowing downtime, you create a harmonious and joyous holiday season for both you and your young children.

Wishing you a serene and memorable Christmas filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments.

About Rachael:

Rachael is a Certified Personal & Business Coach, and a Certified Parent Coach. She works with people who are at a crossroads in their life, who need to make decisions to gain clarity on what they really want for their lives. She works as a tutor with the Irish Lifecoach Institute who are Ireland's leaders in Coach training, Coaching and Personal Development. She hosts workshops, events and talks for companies and organisations and has featured on some of Ireland's leading Health and Wellbeing podcasts and is a regular guest on National radio channels.

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