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SUICIDE PREVENTION SERVICE COULD CLOSE BY CHRISTMAS

Mark Ward TD has called on Minister Butler to make good on her promises to a vital suicide prevention service. Deputy Ward was speaking about Save Our Sons and Daughters, SOSAD, who may have to close their vital service by Christmas if funding is not provided.

Teachta Ward said "A vital suicide prevention service may have to close its doors this Christmas due to a lack of funding. "In October, Deputy Darren O'Rourke and I, along with other colleagues, met members of Save Our Sons and Daughters, SOSAD. Since 2007 this organisation has

worked to raise awareness and help prevent suicide in Ireland. "SOSAD works tirelessly in communities to help those in need, support them and let them know they are not alone on their journey. SOSAD also offer support and services for people who are struggling with suicidal ideation, self-harm, depression, bereavement, stress and anxiety.

"SOSAD has seven offices, based in Cavan, Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Laois. Up to October the organisation had seen 1,600 individual clients and

delivered 18,000 counselling sessions. "I was informed that SOSAD would have to close their doors this year, due to funding issues, with only a couple of months left in the year. It does not receive any statutory funding.

"The representatives said that they contacted the Minister of State's office a couple of times and told to contact the HSE. That is where the barrier seems to be. When they go to the HSE, the HSE simply does not want to know.

"I raised this on the floor of

the Dáil and Minister Butler committed to meeting with the group, which she did at the beginning of November. "To date, none of the commitments that the Minister made at the meeting, were acted upon according to SOSAD. There has been no further contact from Minister Butler.

"SOSAD have been in contact with me again out of desperation. I have written to the Minister and have asked that treat this with the urgency that it deserves. "This is a vital service and cannot be closed due to a lack of urgency."

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CLONDALKIN DRAMA GROUP WIN AT PRESTIGIOUS DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL!

Talented Kids and MVW Talent Agency are absolutely over the moon to announce that our Clondalkin Junior Drama Group have won the title of "BEST FILM for KIDS" at the prestigious Dublin International Comedy Film Festival!!!

Last Autumn, the staff and students of Talented Kids Performing Arts began the long and in depth process of writing, creating and producing a series of Short Films and Music Videos to mark the school's 21st year in business. Since then they have been delighted

to see the success of nine films feature in several film festivals such as Lift Off First-Time Filmmakers Sessions, Best Hollywood Day Short Film Festival and also at The New York Film and Cinematography Festival.

To add to this fantastic string of success, they received news back in early November that 'Wanted' a film made with our fantastic Junior Drama students, was selected for the Dublin International Comedy Film Festival. The festival took place over November 27th to 30th and on the final

day of the festival, several of the film's stars attended the film's screening in the Complex along with director Jess Boylan (a former Talented Kids student) and Katelyn Doyle (Talented Kids teaching assistant). The film was screened along with several other shorts of an extremely high standard, they were honoured to be among them.

'Wanted' was met with an electric reception and it's young stars in attendance were interviewed in a live Q&A with one of the festival's presenters. It was a fantastic day had by all and an amazing experience for our young actors.

They are delighted to say that after the screening, Wanted was announced as the Winner of the festival in the 'Best Film For Kids' category! They are insanely proud of all of their students and would like to thank our amazing crew Alan McLoughlin, Wayne Byrne, Susie Power and Susan Ward.



Pictured Some of the cast of 'Wanted' being interviewed following the film's screening: Rian Bolger, Calum Bolger, Donal Bolger, Emmet O'Connor, Roman Kelly, Isaac Kelly, Hannah Kelly, Parker Lily Donegan.

NEWS GROUP

Published by: Newsgroup, Unit 3 Floor 2 St. Dominics Shopping Centre, St. Dominics Road, Tallaght, Dublin, D24 HK49.

Titles: Tallaght News, Clondalkin News, Lucan News and Rathcoole & Saggart News

Distributed by: Local Post Co. Printed by: Webprint Citywest

Contact Details:
Website www.newsgroup.ie Email: info@newsgroup.ie

Founder: John Russell
Advertising: Anthony Russell anthony@newsgroup.ie
Administration: Sarah Brooks admin@newsgroup.ie

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Prestigious Award for Pharmacy with almost 50 years of service

Caring for the community for decades, the Kara family was honoured to receive a prestigious award at the recent Irish Pharmacy Excellence Awards.



Taking care of the Rathcoole community for almost half a century, Reidy's Pharmacy was taken over by the Kara family in 2000 – and truly is a family business, with four members of the same family working full time at the helm.

It recently won awards at the Family Business Awards, the Customer Experience Awards and most recently the Excellence in Community pharmacy chain/group (single outlet/single superintendent) Award at the 2024 Irish Pharmacy Excellence Awards which were held on Saturday the 30th November at the Mansion House in Dublin. And, working with her parents, Hawwa and Farouk and sister Ruqayya, pharmacist Fatimah Kara, says it was an honour to receive the prestigious accolade.



"To be recognised amongst professionals at such an exceptional level is an immense achievement for all the team in itself, and we are very grateful," she said. "But, to have been chosen as a winner is beyond what we, and our community, could have hoped for. We have worked tirelessly over the years to establish our pharmacy and to provide healthcare of the best possible standard to the local community and this has given us the motivation to keep striving for excellence. It has also shown us that we are on the right track with how we operate. The congratulations, cards and well wishes we have received have been so kind and greatly appreciated – and we are delighted to share this

achievement with the wonderful community we serve." But the eldest daughter is keen to point out that the award is the result of a lot of hard work from all the team, including her mother - a pharmacist – sister - a pharmacy technician - father who oversees administration, stock control and management and their part time staff member, Lee who works on Saturdays.

"Mum and Dad have put in so much work over the years, especially at the beginning when taking over the pharmacy business, which involved working long hours, for six days a week," she said. "They truly set up the foundation of the business, so when I joined in 2012, I was able to introduce new services. Then when my younger sister joined, she took the services to a whole new level, adding her invaluable spark and vibrant energy."

"The family say that I should take the credit for putting us forward for these awards, as I stayed up until 1am ensuring the entries were submitted for the various categories but, ultimately, it is a team effort with everyone contributing their own unique skills to ensure we are where we are today - and continue to thrive."

"I believe that our USP is that we are a family owned and operated business with over 40 years' combined experience in the pharmacy profession, and we uphold the highest standard of patient care to all

who walk through our doors. Also, the wide age range in the family means that we are very well equipped to help our patients and customers of all ages and stages of life from infancy right up to the geriatric age - our family looks after your family."

Having thoroughly enjoyed the award ceremony, the team at Reidy's Pharmacy are looking forward to the year ahead and their continued relationship with the community in Rathcoole.

"We had a lovely night and want to thank Ashville Media Group for their tremendous work and support, and also to congratulate all the finalists and winners at the awards," said Fatimah. "They truly are a credit to the pharmacy profession, and we are honoured to call them our colleagues. The standard of patient and healthcare is exceptional and very inspiring for the future. "The future is looking bright for us also - we are very busy preparing for Christmas, while 2025 is already shaping up to be busy. But we will continue to have our plans in place - winning this award has given us all a renewed spark to keep going, even when it all gets very hectic."

"We will be hosting a celebratory Customer Appreciation Day on the 19th December where we will be serving festive cupcakes and refreshments to thank our customers and the local community for all their unwavering support over the past 24 years in business."

Wishing all our customers and the local community a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We will be closed 25th and 26th December 2024



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PASSAGE OF MOTION TO COMPULSORILY PURCHASE DERELICT PROPERTIES WELCOMED

People Before Profit Councillor Madeleine Johansson has expressed approval of her motion her delight following the approval of her motion at the December meeting



of South Dublin County Council, which calls for the Chief Executive to initiate Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) on all properties listed on the Derelict Sites Register.

This motion is part of a broader effort to tackle the housing crisis by bringing long-neglected properties back into use. Cllr. Johansson hailed the decision as “a small but significant step towards addressing the urgent need for housing and revitalizing our communities.”

In her speech during the council meeting, Cllr. Johansson emphasized the gravity of the housing crisis and the responsibility of local authorities to act decisively. She stated: “This motion is asking the Chief Executive to initiate Compulsory Purchase Orders on all the sites on the Derelict Sites Register. It is a disgrace that we continue to have homes left vacant and derelict, no matter the reason, during

a housing emergency. We have nearly 15,000 people in emergency accommodation, tens of thousands living in overcrowded houses, and across the country, over 160,000 vacant homes. We cannot afford to stand by.”

The motion builds on existing efforts outlined in the Council’s report, which noted progress in acquiring and restoring derelict properties under the Derelict Sites Act. Currently, 23 sites are listed on the register, with ongoing actions that have already seen some properties refurbished, sold, or reoccupied. However, Cllr. Johansson stressed that

these efforts fall short of meeting the pressing need. “I welcome the actions already taken, but the target of 30 set by the government is wholly inadequate. This council must do more to meet and exceed that target to address the scale of the crisis,” she added.

Cllr. Johansson reaffirmed her commitment to holding the council accountable for delivering on this motion and ensuring swift implementation. She concluded that “People Before Profit will continue to lead the charge for bold, meaningful action to resolve the housing crisis.”

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SANTA CLAUS HELPED TO LIGHT UP CHILDREN'S HEALTH IRELAND AT CRUMLIN



RTE's Carl Mullan and Santa Claus helped to light up Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin for Christmas, kindly supported by Children's Health Foundation and were pictured with Clinical Director Sean Walsh, Hazel Pakenham (age 19 from Co. Dublin), Ronan McHugh (age 6 from Lucan, Co. Dublin), Elena Hogan (age 8 from Co. Carlow)

IRISH REFUGEE SUPPORT CHARITY RECEIVES €1,500 DONATION FROM BALDONNELL TEAM

A charity working to support refugees and people seeking protection in Ireland has received a donation of €1,500 from a business in Baldonnell. The donation was made to the Irish Refugee Council and will go towards supporting its youth programmes which offer educational, social, and emotional resources to young people seeking refuge in Ireland. The programmes aim to empower young people seeking protection to form connections, empower them with leadership training and implement projects that promote their mental wellbeing and mentorship, enabling them to build skills and feel more connected within their new communities.

The team from the Amazon fulfilment centre in Baldonnell Business Park made the donation to the charity to support its ongoing work with young refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland. The Amazon team also put together a donation of 60 gift bags for the

charity's youth group winter celebration, containing items such as reusable water bottles, thermal socks and journals.

Speaking on the donation, Deirdre Mullen from the Irish Refugee Council, said "We'd like to say a big thank you to the team at Amazon in Dublin for this support. Donations like this help us to further develop our programmes for young refugees and people seeking protection in Ireland."

Anjali Miles, an employee at Amazon in Dublin who nominated the charity for this donation, added "I'm proud to see Amazon supporting the Irish Refugee Council's great work with this donation. Knowing our donation will help young refugees feel supported and included in our community is heartwarming."

The donation to the Irish Refugee Council was made as part of Amazon's programme to support the communities in and around its operating

locations in Ireland. Since opening its doors in 2022, the Dublin fulfilment centre has supported many community organisations locally, with donations totalling

over €53,000. Charities supported by the team at the fulfilment centre include Cliona's Foundation, Jigsaw and LauraLynn Children's Hospice.



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TUHF RECEIVES PLANNING APPROVAL FOR €60M CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR BRAIN HEALTH AND DEMENTIA

Tallaght University Hospital Foundation [TUHF] gets green light for €60million Innovate Health facility in Tallaght. South Dublin County Council approved plans for the cutting-edge healthcare innovation facility, which will be located on Fourth Avenue in Cookstown recently. The proposed development, a five-storey building, will represent a multi-million Euro investment from Tallaght University

Hospital Foundation [TUHF] in the future of healthcare innovation.

Douglas Collins, Tallaght University Hospital Foundation CEO, welcomed the decision from South Dublin County Council and revealed that the new facility will “serve as a hub for trailblazing research and development”.

The Centre of Excellence for

Brain Health and Dementia, designed by Scott Tallon Walker Architects, will comprise of a central atrium, radiology department, treatment, assessment and consultation rooms, research facilities, associated offices and meeting rooms as well as a reception area, café/restaurant and staff facilities.

Douglas said: “Tallaght University Hospital

Foundation [TUHF] has always been committed to driving the future of healthcare through innovation, and this development is at the forefront of that. This is a groundbreaking project which underscores our dedication to fostering an environment where visionary ideas can thrive and transform into tangible medical breakthroughs. Innovate Health, Centre of Excellence in Brain Health and Dementia will offer a stimulating environment for innovators to collaborate and accelerate the development and adoption of pioneering health solutions. With this project, TUHF aims to support Tallaght University Hospital to revolutionize the landscape of healthcare, setting new standards in patient treatment and care.”

The facility will be strategically located near the Tallaght University Hospital campus, with the two connected by a pedestrian crossing. The

development will also include new footpaths, bike racks and accessible parking. Douglas added: “This facility is poised to become a national leader in healthcare

innovation and TUHF is very excited to drive the Innovate Health, Centre of Excellence in Brain Health and Dementia project forward throughout 2025.”



PALMERSTOWN CAMERA CLUB MONTHLY 'CREATIVE' COMPETITION



Palmerstown Camera Club monthly ‘creative’ competition was held on Wednesday the 27th of November in the Palmerstown Parish Centre. The temperatures were low, but the quality of images were very high. The winners in novice were Annie Whitley, John ó Flaherty, Siobhán ó Donnell, Linda Ffrench. Intermediate winners were James Greenfield, Kieran Cahill, Liam o Dalaigh, Miriam Power and Aidan Lawlor. Advanced winners were Lorraine Morris, Eddie Kavanagh, Orla Brady, Aoife Tierney, Susan Carney, Ger Phelan and Kevin Nuaughton. And a big congratulations to Kieran Cahill for winning image of the month and the Packy Maguire memorial trophy. Palmerstown Camera Club is always open to new members joining. They run every Wednesday night from 8pm to 10pm. Pic credit: Kieran Cahill

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APPLICATIONS INVITED UNDER THE FIFTH TEXACO SUPPORT FOR SPORT INITIATIVE

Applications from sports clubs are now being invited under the fifth Texaco Support for Sport initiative in which a fund of €130,000 will be divided in €5,000 amounts and distributed to successful applicants in each of the twenty-six counties. Over the past four years, a gross figure of over €500,000 has been distributed to a variety of more than 100 sports clubs across Ireland, of which €5,000 each went to four successful Dublin clubs.

Open to all sports clubs irrespective of sporting discipline, size, membership, age, cultural appeal or gender (including clubs that may have been unsuccessful in their application previously), the initiative is one that 'recognises and supports the valuable contribution that sports clubs make to communities and throughout Irish society'. Launching the 2025 initiative, James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations, Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited - the

company that markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand - described the programme as one that "provides a route to vital funding for those clubs and communities that need it most".

Following lines similar to that which proved successful over the past four years, clubs wishing to apply should first register their interest on www.TexacoSupportforSport.com, followed, before closing date, by a completed application that should include details of their sporting activity, the importance of the club in their local community, the purpose for which the funding is sought, and the use to which the funds will be put.

A sole qualifying requirement is that clubs must be properly constituted and hold a valid GS Exemption Number (Games and Sports Exemption Number) that features on the list published by the Office of the Revenue

Commissioners on 30th June 2024.

Closing date for applications is 31st January 2025 with adjudication taking place thereafter.

Leading the adjudication process once again is Texaco Support for Sport ambassador, broadcaster and former Irish rugby

international, Donncha O'Callaghan. Clubs that received funding to date span the spectrum of Irish sporting activity - archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, bowls, boxing, camogie, climbing, cricket, diving, Gaelic football, golf, gymnastics, handball, hockey, hurling, kayaking, rowing, rugby, soccer, squash and tennis amongst them.



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Nearly 100 adult learners from Dublin met at the Maldron Hotel in Tallaght for a regional meeting of the National Further Education and Training (FET) Learner Forum. The event provides a platform for learners to share their experiences and contribute to the future direction of further education and training in Ireland.

of counselling support as positives of their further education and training (FET) experiences. However, challenges were also raised, including part-time courses requiring near full-time commitment, outdated equipment in apprenticeship programs, and inadequate facilities at some centres such as canteens and parking spaces.

Caitríona Murphy, CEO of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) welcomed attendees, saying: "The forum is a really important collaboration between AONTAS and DDLETB. Today is about hearing what you have to say and to let us know the areas in which we can do better. I can assure you that we will act on what you say. We want you to be honest - this is the opportunity for you to influence and inspire, and to shape the direction of FET in Ireland."

During the forum, participants shared valuable suggestions to enhance the FET experience. These included: greater promotion of YouthReach programs in secondary schools, recognition of course workload and hours by the Department of Social Protection, and improvements in childcare facilities and support for learners with dyslexia.

Learners praised small class sizes, the patience of tutors, and the availability

Learners also expressed their views on participating in the forum, with many saying they liked getting the chance to share their experience and have their voices heard. One learner commented:



"There are people listening and students can make an impact on our education". While another participant enjoyed the broad range of learners present: "We are all different ages, but studying shows it doesn't

matter what age you are". The National FET Learner Forum is a collaborative initiative involving AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation; SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority;

and local Education and Training Boards. Every year, thousands of learners from across Ireland participate in the forum, sharing their educational experiences and insights. If you are thinking of going back to education, you

can find further information on www.aontas.com. You can also check out the range of programmes available at the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education Training Board www.ddletb.ie.

Beannachtaí an tSéasúir

Seasons Greetings & Thankyou to all my Constituents & Friends

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SIGHTSAVERS IRELAND LAUNCHES JUNIOR PAINTER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2025

Sightsavers Ireland is excited to announce the return of the Junior Painter of the Year competition for 2025, a nationwide art initiative that invites primary school children across Ireland to explore and express their creativity. This year's theme, A Fairer World In Sight, calls on young artists to consider how we can build a more inclusive and equitable world for all, with a special focus on disability inclusion.

This year's competition was officially launched with Tommy Ó Ceallacháin, last year's second-place winner from Scoil Chaitlín Maude, Tallaght, leading the way. The launch event saw Tommy joined by Ciara Smullen, CEO of Sightsavers Ireland, and Emma Murphy, Head of Communications and Public Relations at Sightsavers Ireland, who were on hand to celebrate the incredible talent of young artists across Ireland.

Junior Painter of the Year 2025 is open to all primary school children in Ireland. Participants are encouraged to explore the theme A Fairer World In Sight through drawings, paintings, or other creative artworks that reflect their vision for

a world where all people, of all abilities, can thrive. This year's competition promises to be more exciting than ever, with hundreds of students expected to participate. All entries will be judged based on creativity, originality, and how well they engage with the theme of disability inclusion and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At the Junior Painter of the Year 2024 awards ceremony, Elora Ní Laoire, a 10-year-old artist from Gaelscoil Uí Fhiaich, County Kildare, was named the overall winner for her powerful piece Global Identity, that's how it's meant to be. Elora's painting vividly depicted an inclusive school environment, with Braille and other elements highlighting the importance of disability inclusion. The piece captured the spirit of Sightsavers' mission to create equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities.

2024 judges, ecological artist Ashleigh Downey and illustrator Jordan Barry-Browne, were impressed by the creativity and depth shown by young artists in their work. As in previous years, the competition celebrates not only artistic

talent but also a commitment to the values of inclusion, global citizenship, and the SDGs.

Ciara Smullen, CEO of Sightsavers Ireland, remarked: "The Junior Painter of the Year competition continues to be one of our most rewarding events each year. We are inspired by the talent and passion of young artists from across Ireland, who use their creativity to reflect

on how we can create a more inclusive world. I look forward to seeing what this year's participants will bring to the theme of A Fairer World In Sight."

How to Enter: To participate in the Junior Painter of the Year competition, children are encouraged to take part in the Put Us in the Picture workshop. This educational initiative helps children understand disability inclusion and the SDGs

through age-appropriate resources. After completing the workshop, students can submit their artwork, along with a certificate of participation.

Each participant will receive a certificate, with additional prizes for the top entries. Step 1: Complete the Put Us in the Picture workshop and print off the certificate. Step 2: Create a drawing, painting, or other artwork based on the theme, A Fairer

World In Sight. Step 3: Fill out the application form and submit the artwork along with the certificate to Meadhbh Mlowezi, Sightsavers Ireland, 305 The Capel Building, Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7.

For more information, to download resources, or to register for the competition, visit sightsavers.ie. The Junior Painter of the Year competition is proudly funded by Irish Aid.



Pic credit: Ben Ryan



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DECISION NOT TO FUND REDEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BASKETBALL ARENA 'EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTING'

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has said that it is extremely disappointing that government has chosen not to support the redevelopment of the National Basketball Arena through the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund. Crowe said that this is especially disappointing given the speed at which basketball in Ireland is growing as a sport and the massive boost this would have given the local area.

Seán Crowe said "I was delighted when South Dublin County Council granted the planning for the redevelopment of the National Basketball Arena

into a world class facility. I thought it would be a no brainer for the government to support this project in any way they could. "It was incredibly disappointing to hear them from the CEO of Basketball Ireland recently that they were unsuccessful in getting support from the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund, the fund specifically set up for these kinds of projects.

"Basketball is the fastest growing sport in Ireland. It provides health benefits, social interaction and outdoor courts can be set up reasonably cheaply. We should be encouraging this

sport as much as possible and that includes by supporting the redevelopment of the National Arena into a facility that can be a beacon to attract more young people to the sport.

"Ireland is increasingly a more difficult country for young people to grow up in. That is why we would significantly increase the investment in sport, including an annual increase of €55m to the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund so that we can have the world class facilities that Irish athletes need so that we can drive on sports like basketball."

DUBLIN FARMER CONTRIBUTES TO NEW BOOK ON SUSTAINABLE FARMING



Irish farmers including Olly Nolan, have joined forces for a new book combining scientific research with local knowledge that gives farmers and others practical tips on how to create a more sustainable future, while protecting land and nature. At a time of great challenge and uncertainty for farm families, The Farming For Nature Handbook is a practical guide to protecting and restoring nature. With contributions from more than 50 Irish farmers, the book also shares farmers' experiences of how working with nature can help reduce costs and improve incomes.

While there is widespread awareness of the environmental damage caused by poor farming practices, this book in contrast attempts to highlight the positive ways farmers can sustain and enhance our natural environment, and benefit from the results. It is hoped The Farming For Nature Handbook will become the essential guide to caring profitably for our land.

The book launched on November 28th, was inspired by regular requests to the non-profit Farming For Nature project from landowners, farmers, smallholders and growers wanting to learn how best to manage their land, big or small, in a way that enhances habitats, protects profits, and safeguards our natural environment and rural communities. The Farming For Nature project was set up to support, encourage and inspire farmers who farm, or who wish to farm, in a way that will improve the natural health of our countryside.

Olly Nolan, a mixed stock farmer from Glenasmole, is one of the contributors and shares his views on sustainable farming in the book. He says "It's very important to remember that in Ireland we have over 100 species of bee and the honeybee is only one of them. So, I'm always conscious of not having too many colonies of honey bee in one area. Too many beehives would also end up competing with all these other important pollinators who are also under pressure due to loss of habitat and pesticide use."

The Farming For Nature Handbook shares tips for a better farming future and shows how to manage land in a way that enhances habitats, increases wildlife and harnesses natural processes while protecting livelihoods, food security and profiles. It is not just targeted at farmers but is for anyone who wants to grow, garden and gather better. The book was conceived and developed by Brigid Barry, researched and

mainly written by conservation ecologist Dr. Emma Hart on behalf of Farming For Nature and co-edited by Dr. Brendan Dunford of the Burrenbeo Trust. It is beautifully illustrated with watercolours and sketches by farmer and artist Clive Bright as well as digital images by scientific illustrator William Helps. The book has been described by President of Ireland Michael D Higgins as "a timely and essential contribution to the on-going discourse on how we, as a society, must respond to some of the most pressing challenges of our time".

The Farming For Nature Handbook, published by Dingle Publishing has a RRP of €30 and is available to order at www.farmingfornature.ie. The book was supported financially by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Lifes2Good Foundation.

Commenting, Farming For Nature Manager and co-founder Brigid Barry said "There is a massive gap in the market for this book - an easy-to-access toolkit to help tackle the biodiversity and climate crises. We hope it gets into every jeep and tractor in the countryside to guide farmers in these tricky times. Many farmers start by making small changes. Then, as they join a like-minded community and begin to experience the value of nature returning to their farms, they don't look back. Nature unleashes your land's full potential."

Farming For Nature co-founder Dr. Brendan Dunford said "Two thirds of our countryside is owned and managed by farmers, and we view these farmers as potentially a huge resource in addressing the biodiversity crisis that Ireland faces today. This has seen declines in most of our habitats and species - for instance, it's estimated that we've lost 30% of our semi-natural grasslands in only one decade. To mobilise these 'farmers for nature' we need better funding but also better guidance, and this handbook will hopefully help inform the journey ahead towards a more sustainable future for our wonderful landscapes and those who farm them."

Conservation scientist and co-author Dr. Emma Hart added "At a time of profound loss—of clean water, healthy soil, and our native wildlife—the Farming For Nature Handbook is both a message of hope and a call to action. It shows how each of us can take charge of the health and vitality of the landscapes we inhabit, and help shift the dial toward a brighter, more resilient future."

PIETA'S 24/7 CRISIS HELPLINE THIS CHRISTMAS



Influencer and Pieta supporter Louise Cooney pictured with Pieta's National Services Manager and psychotherapist, Verona Farrell showcasing Pieta's 24/7 Crisis Helpline opening hours, including Christmas Day. At The Grand Hotel, Malahide. Pic credit: Robbie Reynolds Photography



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By Breda Corrigan

The new Touareg 'R' eHybrid is the hottest version of Volkswagen's large, all-wheel drive SUV, and it is currently the most powerful Volkswagen ever made. Producing a hefty 462bhp and 700Nm of torque, it is capable of sprinting from 0-100km/h in just 5.2-seconds, on its way to a top speed of 250km/h (where permitted). By selecting 'E mode', drivers can experience all-electric driving at speeds of up to 140km/h with a sufficiently-charged battery, and the 14.3kWh battery provides the electric motor with enough power to cover up to 50km on electric power alone. Now in its third-generation, the new version of VW's high-tech flagship SUV represents the continuation of a now tried, tested and proven concept, and it represents the symbiosis of high performance and electric efficiency.

Sporty, Understated Design.

The new Touareg R eHybrid version takes the elegant look of its predecessor and enhances it even further, as the iconic appearance of the new model is extended with carefully selected design elements. Additionally, the standard 'Black Style' design package affords

the Touareg a stylish presence in a premium, understated look. Exterior highlights include IQ.Light HD matrix headlights in a new 6-lens design with a new signature light element, a new front grille with a horizontal light strip, new boot lid with LED light design with dynamic indicators, an illuminated rear Volkswagen logo, R-specific blue brake callipers with 'R' logo, a 'Black Style' exterior package, and the choice of two new colours: Chili Red and Silicone Grey Matt. Cabin occupants will appreciate the upgraded interior equipment with R-specific differentiation, along with soft door trims for a higher quality look and feel, atmospheric ambient light with individual lighting options, and an Innovision Cockpit with a large 15-inch display that features a new infotainment system as standard. The navigation system has also been updated with more detailed maps and more conversational voice control. The most obvious change inside the cabin is the new steering wheel, complete with touch-sensitive controls. The high-quality cabin is refined and reassuringly solid, with lots of soft-touch materials used throughout. There is plenty of room for front and rear seat

passengers, and the boot has a cargo capacity of 665-litres behind the rear seats, with this figure increasing to 1,675-litres with the rear seats folded.

Five-Star Safety.

The new Touareg gets more standard safety systems than any other VW product, with cutting-edge sensors and safety features ready to protect occupants in the event of a crash, as well as systems designed to stop a crash happening in the first place. The regular Volkswagen Touareg achieved a full five-star safety rating when it was tested by Euro NCAP.

Test Car Details.

My test car was a Touareg 'R' eHybrid, which was finished in Grenadilla Black Metallic paintwork, with optional 21-inch 'Leeds' diamond-turned black alloy wheels, and it looked stunning in the Autumnal sunshine. The mighty 3.0-litre V6 petrol engine works in conjunction with the electric motor and battery pack to produce outstanding performance and, whether driving around town or cruising along a motorway, driver

enjoyment is guaranteed. When driving on electric power alone, the result is smooth and silent progression and, even when the petrol engine cuts in, the silence isn't spoiled. However, under harsh acceleration, the engine becomes vaguely vocal, but the beautiful sound of the 3.0-litre engine is pleasingly addictive. The Touareg 'R' eHybrid comes with self-levelling, height-adjustable air suspension, and it proves truly beneficial when it comes to overall ride comfort. Road surface imperfections and speed ramps can be tackled with ease, and even larger potholes are isolated with incredible composure. Tight body control ensures minimal body roll through sharp bends, and the nicely-weighted steering is accurate and responsive. For such a large SUV, the Touareg handles neatly and it feels well connected to the road at all times. The high-set driving position (with multiple electric-adjustment options) provides terrific all-round visibility, and the standard front and rear parking sensors, along with front and rear cameras, make parking a doddle. The 3.0-litre TFSI petrol engine in union with the Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) system has a combined

emission figure of 48g/km, and this results in annual road tax of just €140. Similarly impressive is the official combined fuel consumption figure of 2.3l/100km, but this greatly depends on a number of factors, such as whether every journey is undertaken with a fully-charged battery, along with road conditions, weather conditions and individual driving style. As the flagship model in Volkswagen's passenger car line-up, the regular Touareg literally wants for nothing in terms of comfort, convenience, safety, security, connectivity and infotainment features, but the additional sporty design elements and standard equipment found in the 'R' eHybrid make it extra-special in every way.

Verdict & Pricing.

The new Volkswagen Touareg 'R' eHybrid is a highly commendable large SUV that provides drivers with sports car-rivalling performance, impressive cabin and boot space, an outstanding array of standard features, and the realistic running costs associated with an advanced petrol/electric hybrid powertrain. The Touareg 'R' eHybrid is priced from €103,050 (ex-delivery).

WORKIQ PARTNERS WITH TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

WorkIQ, the new home of start-ups and growing enterprises in South Dublin and part of the new Innovation Quarter Tallaght, has partnered with Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) to provide students with direct access to the entrepreneurs and businesses operating in the WorkIQ Innovation Centre.

The partnership between WorkIQ and TU Dublin will provide students of the University with access to resources such as networking events, skill-building workshops, and internships in high growth sectors which will empower and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs. WorkIQ offers modern and flexible office and coworking space for up to 60 businesses and is already home to a number of successful entities, including local startups and companies such as InDigital, a performance marketing agency and H3D, an innovator in AI CAD technology for healthcare.

Both WorkIQ and TU Dublin are committed to connecting the next generation of

entrepreneurs with the thriving ecosystem in WorkIQ and the wider Tallaght Innovation Quarter through a variety of engaging opportunities. Students will be invited to WorkIQ for interactive events, mentoring sessions and hands-on experiences that will bridge the gap between academia and industry. Through these initiatives and workshops, students will have the unique opportunity to engage directly with local innovators, connect with like-minded peers, and develop skills essential for a career in today's rapidly evolving marketplace.

Daniel Halpin, Business Growth Manager at WorkIQ, says "We are delighted to be partnering with TU Dublin in inspiring and equipping South Dublin's future entrepreneurs and innovators. This partnership is a significant milestone for WorkIQ as we continue to create a supportive, innovation-driven culture that empowers students to be bold, confident, and proud of their ideas. By creating an environment where students have direct

access to the successful businesses and entrepreneurs within WorkIQ, we're not only fostering their entrepreneurial spirit but also helping them find their voice and feel genuinely supported in pursuing their ambitions. This partnership highlights the importance of collaboration, growth, and resilience within the Tallaght community.

A massive thank you to everyone involved in bringing this vision to life."

TU Dublin is one of the leading universities in Ireland in terms of its innovation portfolio supporting economic development in the region through the Innovation Office and Enterprise Engagement. Since 2018, TU Dublin Innovation has also supported over 150 start-ups and SMEs to develop new products and services by providing access to researchers with expertise in a range of disciplines, including Food Innovation, Product Prototyping, Cyber Security, and Artificial Intelligence. TU Dublin has two thriving enterprise centres in Dublin



24, supporting over 30 start-up companies and 11 larger scale companies. This partnership will further TU Dublin's ambition of cultivating the future of entrepreneurship in the area.

Dr. Rosie Hand, Head of Discipline in Advertising and Communications at Technological University Dublin, says "At TU Dublin, we are thrilled to begin our exciting partnership

with WorkIQ, where the stage is set for nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs. Together, we're building a foundation where creativity, innovation, and bold ideas come to life, empowering students to lead with confidence and drive change."

Strategically located on Council-owned land in Tallaght Town Centre, WorkIQ forms a key part of Innovation Quarter

Tallaght - a €16 million development supported by South Dublin County Council with significant support from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund to foster sustainable urban growth. Register your interest in renting a workspace or joining a community of innovators, thinkers, entrepreneurs and creatives at www.workiq.ie

FIVE SOUTH DUBLIN PARKS RECEIVE GREEN FLAG AWARD

South Dublin County Council is delighted to announce that five of our parks have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Awards by An Taisce. This recognition celebrates commitment to high standards in park management, environmental responsibility, and

community engagement. The parks honoured with Green Flags are Waterstown Park, Sean Walsh Park, Tymon Park, Corkagh Park, and Rathfarnham Castle Park.

The Green Flag Award scheme aims to promote the development of high-quality

public parks and green spaces that are managed in an environmentally sustainable manner. It encourages parks and green spaces to achieve high environmental standards and effective management, with awards based on eight key criteria. Additionally, Tymon Park and

Waterstown Park received high commendations in the 2024 All Ireland Pollinator Award.

Speaking on the announcement, Colm Ward, Chief Executive of South Dublin County Council said; "Achieving

Green Flag awards for five of our parks recognises our commitment to the continued development and management of high-quality parks and green spaces. It is great to achieve this prestigious award for our parks which are a haven for recreation and

enjoyment by all. I would like to particularly thank our Public Realm staff for their hard work and dedication which has been instrumental in securing these awards, supported by active and welcome involvement by community volunteers and local residents' groups."



COUNCIL'S OVER RELIANCE ON OUTSOURCING LEADS TO MAINTENANCE FAILURES

People Before Profit has called out South Dublin County Council's reliance on outsourcing for the repair and maintenance of council homes, labelling it inefficient and costly. Figures obtained from South Dublin County Council show that nearly half of the Council's 2024 maintenance and refurbishment budget—€10.22 million of €20.47 million— is allocated to outsourced services.

People Before Profit Councillors Madeleine Johansson and Darragh Adelaide shared insights from their direct interactions with council tenants. "We've spoken with numerous tenants who have been waiting months for contractors to handle essential repairs, only to find that work is often subpar, requiring additional fixes. Residents are left in unacceptable living conditions due to prolonged waiting periods due to reliance on outsourced labour.

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ONLY 3 IN 10 DEVICES RECYCLED IN DUBLIN

Almost half of Ireland's small electronics are bought in November and December, but Dublin is lagging in recycling rates, with only three in ten devices returning to the

circular economy, new data reveals. The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Ireland figures show that nationally, over 11 million

small electronic items were bought last year, with 4.4 million sold during Black Friday and Christmas alone. However, Dublin's recycling trends show that most of 3 in 10 of these items won't be recycled when they can no longer be repaired or reused. The recycling rate is even worse for toys such as gaming consoles and battery-operated action figures, falling to just 10% nationally, leaving millions of devices lying in drawers or discarded irresponsibly.

With 73% of Irish consumers now shopping online, WEEE Ireland is urging Dublin residents to embrace sustainable habits by swapping old for new responsibly.

"Electronics are a top category in online purchases,

particularly during high-sales periods like Black Friday and Christmas when cost-conscious consumers hunt for deals," said Elizabeth O'Reilly, Head of Environmental Compliance at WEEE Ireland. "However, recycling rates in Dublin for small devices remain low, particularly for online purchases, despite the availability of free take back services for recycling from the likes of Amazon. "With the holiday shopping season in full swing, it's more important than ever for consumers to know their options. "Whether you shop in-store or online, every retailer is required under Irish legislation to accept obsolete devices for free recycling when selling a similar new one."

Ms O'Reilly says WEEE

Ireland is encouraging people to check their retailers' take back policies as each offers different ways to return items for recycling. "Some online retailers offer collection services with their own delivery services and others offer options for free postal or courier return.

Then, if you simply swap while you shop, you recycle your defunct device to ensure it doesn't end up in landfill. "This small action can make a big impact, helping conserve finite resources while reducing environmental harm, as well as protecting human and animal health."

WEEE Ireland's tips for a more sustainable Black Friday and Christmas Recycle while you buy: Take advantage of free recycling when purchasing

new devices; Opt for refurbished: Explore nearly new and refurbished device offerings, and related trade-in offers, when looking for replacement items. Repair first: Extend the life of your gadgets by repairing them before replacing; Reuse and share: Pass on functioning electronics in good quality to others who may need them; Recycle responsibly: Use authorised WEEE Ireland collection points for broken devices beyond repair and reuse.

WEEE Ireland offers hundreds of collection points across local authority civic amenity centres, allowing consumers to drop off old electronic devices for free. Participating online and physical retailers are also part of its nationwide effort to combat e-waste.



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30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL



Pictured at County Hall, Tallaght, on the occasion of the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the founding of South Dublin County Council were (L to R) Mayor Baby Pereppadan, Gus O'Connell, Charlie O'Connor and Council CEO Colm Ward. Both Gus O'Connell and Charlie O'Connor were elected to Dublin County Council in 1991 and both retired last June.

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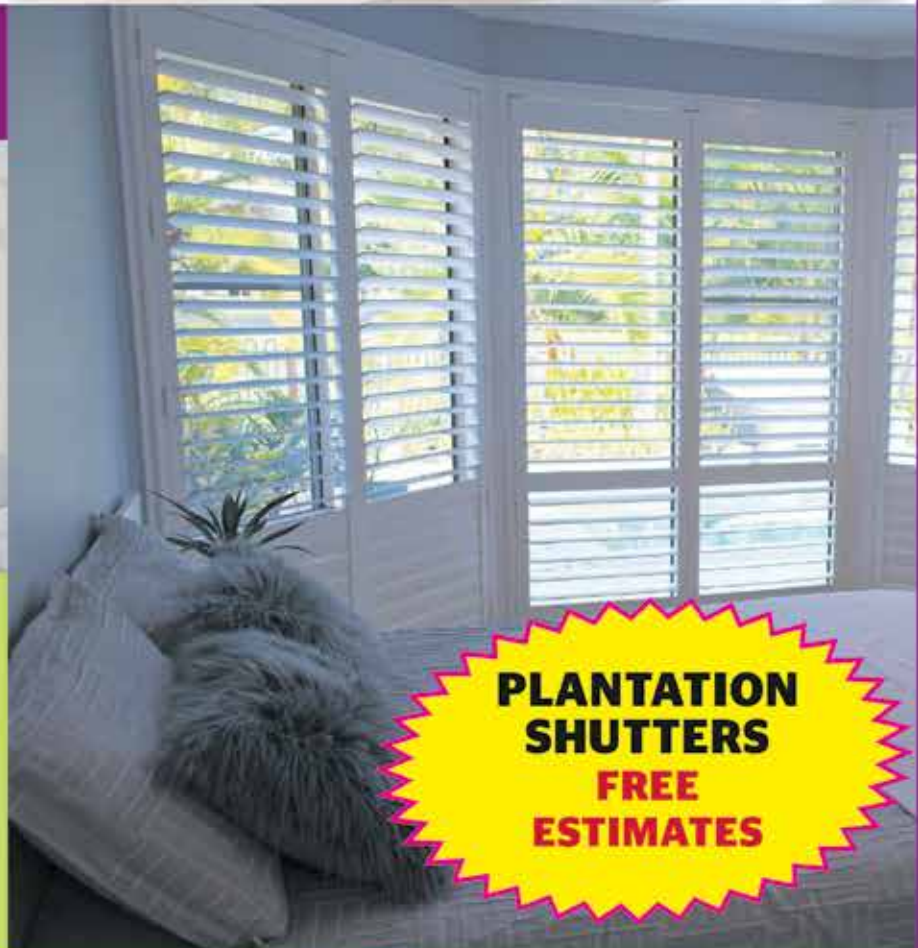
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