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Shortlisted Ballinascarthy artist Mischa May Patwell, of St. Joseph's School, Clonakilty, is pictured with her portrait 'My Sister Eala' in the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork for the opening of The Zurich Portrait Prize and Zurich Young Portrait Prize.  
Pic Michael Mac Sweeney/Provision

## Visit Cork invites West Cork tourism businesses to special Industry Day

Visit Cork, the official tourism body for the Cork region, is hosting a briefing session for those involved in the tourism industry on Wednesday, February 12 at Radisson Blu Hotel and Spa, Little Island.

Anyone with an interest in tourism or in attracting visitors to Cork is invited to attend the Tourism Industry Day, from local community and tourist groups, to festivals and event organisations, to accommodation and experience providers, for an update on Visit Cork's achievements to date and plans for the promotion of Cork for leisure tourism (Pure Cork) and business tourism (Cork Convention Bureau). They will be joined by their partners in Fáilte Ireland.

It promises to be a highly interactive, dynamic session with presentations from Gerard O'Mahoney, Chair of Visit Cork, Seamus Heaney, Head of Visit Cork, Evelyn O'Sullivan, Manager of Cork Convention Bureau, Sam Johnson, the Manager of the Regional Convention Bureau of Ireland, and Arthur McGauran from SITE Ireland (Society of Incentive Travel Executives).

Alison Levins from Fáilte Ireland will also unveil 'Keep Discovering', the new roadmap to delivering growth in the domestic short break market to 2023, and Eoin Kennedy from Zone Digital will advise how you can take advantage of social media for both MICE and leisure tourism.

Commenting on the industry event, Seamus Heaney, Head of Visit Cork, said, "We encourage everyone involved in the tourism industry in Cork to attend the Visit Cork Industry Day and explore how they can work with Pure Cork and Cork Convention Bureau to enhance their business and help collectively promote all that Cork has to offer to domestic and international business and leisure visitors."

The Pure Cork Industry Day will take place from 10am-1.30pm, with registration from 9.30am. It is an open invitation to any individual or business involved in tourism in Cork (City and County).

Register today for the industry day by contacting the team at Visit Cork on (021) 431 8036.

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BROWN THOMAS



# Castletownbere RNLI lifeboat crew to be honoured with Gallantry award

Castletownbere RNLI lifeboat crew are to be honoured by the charity for a dramatic rescue of a fishing crew that took place in challenging conditions and resulted in the lives of six fishermen being saved. Coxswain Dean Hegarty is to be awarded a Bronze Medal for Gallantry by the Institution and Lifeboat Mechanic Martin O'Donoghue, lifeboat volunteers Seamus Harrington, John Paul Downey and David Fenton, along with Deputy Launching Authority Michael Martin-Sullivan, will all receive a framed Letter of Thanks from the Chairman of the RNLI.

The rescue of the six men who were the crew of the 25-metre fishing vessel, 'Clodagh O', took place on the evening of October 10, 2018 at an area known as 'The Pipers' immediately south-west of the harbour entrance at Castletownbere. Answering an urgent 'Mayday' from the fishing crew, the charity's lifeboat launched in darkness into a force 9 gale, driving rain and heavy squalls, to rescue the crew who were in grave and imminent danger

due to their vessel having lost all power after their propeller became fouled on their fishing gear.

Arriving on scene, the lifeboat crew saw that the fishing vessel was located in a precarious position and the Coxswain made the decision not to take the crew off the boat but instead establish a towline in breaking four to five metre swells.

With the weather deteriorating, there was only a short window of opportunity to save the men before the vessel would hit the rocks or cliff face and be lost. With the Coxswain skilfully manoeuvring the lifeboat into position and holding it steady in mountainous seas, the lifeboat crew on deck established a tow on first attempt. The Coxswain had to initially steer the lifeboat out to sea to gain a safe separation between the rocks and cliffs before he could then turn the lifeboat and start the journey back to the harbour. The tow was carried out at a speed of a half a knot in case it parted, only gathering speed as they found shelter. Once inside the safety of the harbour two local tugboats

helped to secure the boat alongside the pier.

RNLI Lifesaving Manager Sean Dillon delivered a letter from RNLI Chief Executive Mark Dowie and informed the lifeboat crew of the decision at a crew meeting in the station on January 16. Owen Medland, RNLI Lifesaving Lead and Brian O'Driscoll, Area Lifesaving Manager were also in attendance.

In informing the station of the award Mr. Dowie said, "In making the awards, the RNLI Trustees recognise the complexity of the service, the level of risk and the quality of decision making by all involved in the service. These awards mark the courage, skill and dedication shown by the Coxswain, crew and officials involved, and are a testament to outstanding teamwork and seamanship in perilous conditions which resulted in the successful rescue of six people."

Castletownbere RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager Paul Stevens, who was formerly the Coxswain's school principal, commented, "We are extremely



Castletownbere RNLI Medal rescue crew

proud of our lifeboat crew for their incredibly brave actions that night, which resulted in the saving of six lives. The RNLI does not give out awards for gallantry lightly and to receive one is a great privilege. We are a strong fishing community here and we have seen too much loss at sea. This rescue was relatively fast in lifeboat terms but carried out in extremely challenging conditions and relying on absolute precision and split-second decision making by our Cox-

swain. The skill and expertise of the lifeboat crew onboard meant that every action was well executed and successful along with the sound judgement of the Launching Authority. I look forward to a great day out with our crew when they receive their honours in front of their proud families."

This is the first RNLI Medal for Gallantry to be awarded in Ireland in ten years. The last one was a Bronze Medal for Portrush RNLI station mechanic

Anthony Chambers, for his rescue of two boys trapped in a cave near Castlerock with a rising tide.

The RNLI Bronze Medal for Gallantry and the Institution's Framed Letter of Thanks from the Chairman will be presented at a ceremony to be held in the near future. Details of the arrangements will be released nearer the date.

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# Making the connections

Dr Pat Bracken is currently working as a consultant for the Department of Mental Health at the World Health Organisation in Geneva, researching and writing an international guide to good services and practices across the world. The consultant psychiatrist, who was Clinical Director of West Cork Mental Health Service from 2004 to 2016, is known for his more individual and broader approach to tackling mental health problems. He talks to **Mary O'Brien** about the importance of the creative arts in mental health and the challenges facing the mental health system in Ireland today.



Pat started his training in psychiatry in Cork back in the early 1980s. “While there were some really fine people working in the system, and I learned a lot from them, the service model was terrible and the conditions in which people were treated were pretty dismal. There was very little happening in the community,” he recalls.

Things have changed a great deal since then.

“The old asylums have closed and most mental health work is now done on an out-patient basis. I think the rise of what we call the ‘service-user movement’ has been transformative, and attitudes to mental health problems are gradually changing for the better.”

After finishing his training in the UK, Pat worked in Uganda for three years with victims of wartime violence and torture. He went on to become a consultant psychiatrist in Birmingham and Bradford and, from 2006-2008 a Professor of Philosophy, Diversity and Mental Health at University of Central Lancashire. He was one of the founders of the Critical Psychiatry Network in the UK twenty years ago. In 2004, he became Clinical Director of West Cork Mental Health Service.

“Although there are many really good people working in the mental health system in Ireland and conditions for patients have improved a great deal over the time I have been involved, service-users are telling us that there is a lot more to do and a great deal more to change about how we think about mental health issues and we respond to them,” says Pat.

“They are telling us that too often the only answer they get when they go for help is medication. While drugs ‘can’ be helpful, they are really only one part of what people need. Sadly, many service users say that that is all they are offered.”

In Pat’s experience, people recover from mental health problems along many different pathways and what will work for one person may not work for another.

“We need to think imaginatively and creatively about how we help people find the path that will work for them. Drugs can be vital for one person but just a source of unpleasant side-effects for another. Psychotherapy can be important, but some people find talking about their problems to be unhelpful and painful. Feeling part of a community and connecting with other people is extremely important. The creative arts (music, singing, craft work, painting, drama and story-telling) can be liberating but so too can gardening, exercise, travel, religion and spirituality. When I worked in Africa I witnessed the power of traditional healing practices. Mental health services cannot provide all of these themselves but they should be working to open up connections with individuals and community groups that can.”

Pat’s interest in the creative arts and what we call ‘mental illness’ started when he was a teenager. “The more I read in this area, the more I wanted to work with people who were going through different sorts of mental states. I chose the long route in, through medicine, but I got there in the end,” he explains.

He believes that we are only beginning to understand the value of the creative arts in the field of mental health. “At the moment, the creative arts are seen as a sort of ‘add-on’ to the ‘real’ work of mental health, which is about diagnosis, medication and maybe sessions of psychotherapy. I look forward to a time when this prioritisation is reversed and mental health work is seen to be ‘primarily’ about creativity, finding meaning and making connections, and the drugs, diagnoses and therapy are seen as secondary to this. The work at 49 North Street by Kevin O’Shanahan and his colleagues has been of vital importance for many people.”

In a recent interview, Pat talked about his work in Uganda and how the classical or typical theories of mental

health had to take into account the local cultures in order to be effective. How does that relate to the Irish psyche?

“I don’t think I have an easy answer!” he says. I guess that I’m not convinced that we can talk easily about an ‘Irish psyche’ as such. However, we can never escape our history and I think that, in many ways, we are still grappling with post-colonial issues in Ireland and struggling to free ourselves from the sort of inferiority complex that comes with this. I think this fed the deference to authority that we saw through the 20th century, in relation to the Catholic Church and other institutions. Perhaps the results of our recent referendums are a sign that we are moving on.”

Over the course of his career, the biggest challenge has been the dominance of the pharmaceutical industry in the field of mental health and the narrow biomedical approach it has given rise to in his profession. However, as a mental health doctor, seeing people recover from crises and emerge stronger was always a joy he says. “That trumps everything else!”

During his time as Clinical Director of the Mental Health Service in West Cork, Pat says he was blessed with the colleagues he had during his time there and also felt privileged to be brought into the lives of the individuals and families he worked with over the years. “We have a wonderfully diverse community here in West Cork and my work was also varied and challenging.”

“However, I think we all worked within a system that we didn’t design and that ultimately has its origins in the asylums of the last generation. It will take more time, effort and struggle to really free ourselves from that.” Pat retired early so that he would have time to work outside that system for a while.

Dr Pat Bracken lives in Schull with his wife Dr Joan Giller. The couple have four children. When he’s not working, he enjoys being involved with his local drama group.

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# Hail Brigid



A  
**WEST CORK  
LIFE**

Tina Pisco

It's been a long and drawn out January. Though the weather has been mild, it still felt twice as long it should be. It just kept dragging on. I know it's not just me, as many of my friends have also been complaining... So, it was really welcome to wake up and find that it was finally February and to celebrate the lovely feast of St Brigid.

Like many Christian holidays, St Brigid's Day started out as a pagan feast day: Imbolc, which is the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. In the Celtic calendar it is followed by Bealtaine in May, Lughnasa in August and Samhain at the end of the year. In Ireland, February 1 is associated with the return



of Spring. This confused me when I first moved to West Cork, as I had been taught as a child that Spring begins on March 20. Indeed, in most of the countries I lived in, February was still frozen and icy, and you had to wait until the end of March to feel the change of season. That Spring comes so early it is definitely one of the joys of living here.

Is there any other time of the year that is more welcome? Though I cherish the long summer days, the coming of Spring is the when I feel most grateful (probably because it holds the promise of Summer!). We have been having some very fine days this Winter, but regardless of the weather, after St Brigid's day there is no denying that Winter is waning and Spring is on its way. A quick walk around the garden makes it very obvious. Our camelia jump-started the season and is now in full bloom. It is so lovely to fill a vase with a huge bouquet of bright blooms, the pink petals

offset by the vibrant yellow stamens. The daffs are poking out of the ground, heralding a yellow ribbon of flowers down the drive in a few weeks' time, and under one tree a large patch of snow-drops is already unfurling tiny white blooms. The trees we planted in the back all have little buds on them, and even the rhubarb is sprouting. The real treat however is a tiny patch of wild crocuses that I look out for every year. Once I see them, I know that everything is waking up and the gardening year will begin again...

There's also no denying that the days are getting longer. Soon we'll be enjoying a "fine stretch in the evening". It really feels like a weight has been lifted from my chest, allowing me to lift my head and look around after dozing by the fire for the last two months. Nothing cheers me more than seeing the light and life come back to the land.

The Goddess Brigid was the daughter of Dagda, patriarch of the Tuath De Dannan. Both Brigid and her father were associated with Spring, fertility, healing and poetry. Fast forward to the fifth century when the King of Leinster's daughter, becomes a Christian and sets up Ireland's first monastery in Kildare, at a site of that is said to have been dedicated to the Goddess Brigid.

St Brigid, as the King's daughter became after performing a number of miracles, is today one of Ireland's patron saints. She is still venerated, though some of the practices such as leaving out a scarf on the eve of her feast day (to be blessed by the saint and used for healing), or making dolls called Biddys in her effigy, are not as popular anymore. However, the distinctive Brigid's cross is still seen in many homes, or worn on a necklace. I love the St Brigid's cross and still have the ones my girls made in school hanging in the kitchen.

This week a petition on the Internet caught my fancy. It was a call to make Brigid's day a national holiday, and I think it is a really good idea. Not only would we have a holiday that celebrates a woman (long overdue!) but also Brigid's embodiment of Spring and renewal of the Earth, of fertility and healing, of hope in the future, seems like just what we need in these difficult times. Hail Brigid!

## Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the February edition of West Cork People.

Finally dark and dreary January is over. The sun is shining as I write this and the winds of change have begun to blow; who knows what kind of Ireland we'll wake up to after the votes have been counted this month. You'll find messages from some of our candidates inside this issue; do take a look if you're still undecided who to vote for.

For the month that's in it, we have a special Valentine's and Spring/Summer Weddings feature. With a selection of wedding venues and services, as well as advice on everything from flowers to beauty to fashion, you'll find lots of information and advice. We also have some lovely interviews with couples from around West Cork who share the details of their romantic proposals, wedding plans and hopes for the future.

For those of you about to start building your home or thinking about renovating, our Spring Homes Feature offers inspiration and advice on what's out there. Follow Jason and Sile's journey in building their family home from planning to completion. Be inspired by our selection of on-trend interior ideas for 2020, from shops around West Cork. Find out how you can create your own electricity using the latest technology in solar power. If living a simpler life in a smaller space without a huge mortgage sounds good, then check out our interview with Big Man Tiny Homes founder JP Simpson – the home of your dreams could be more in reach than you think.

As usual we have lots of interviews, news and events from around West Cork. Dr Pat Bracken talks to us about the importance of the creative arts in mental health and the challenges facing the mental health system in Ireland today. Dr Jeff Featherstone gives his take, as a GP, on the Bantry Hospital situation. Karen sends a delicious recipe all the way from Mexico, Noah shares how to grow the perfect potato and history buff Shane explains why you'll find a Credit Union in Monserrat in the Caribbean.

For this and lots more, see inside...

I hope you enjoy the read,

Mary



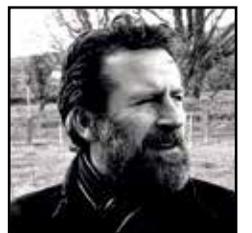
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West Cork People

## Public invited to attend Bantry Tidy Towns AGM



**B**antry Tidy Towns AGM takes place in the Maritime Hotel, Bantry on Monday February 10, at 8pm. New faces and new ideas are needed and all are welcome to attend.

"We would really appreciate if people could set aside just one hour on the night to come along and see what's involved and express their opinions," said a member of the committee.

Over the years the focus of the Tidy Town Competition has evolved and today it is as much about biodiversity and sustainability, as it is about keeping your town clean. With this in mind, there are many out there who could get

involved and make a real difference to the town of Bantry, helping to enhance the great work that has taken place in recent years.

"We really need new faces and new ideas. We ask that local business people, other local organisations, residents of the town and surrounds make an effort to come out on the night and show your support for Bantry and the small but enthusiastic committee – there is no obligation to join the committee but you may be able to help in some small way to lessen the load of others while enhancing the town as a place to work, live or visit. We hope to see you there!"

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## Courtmacsherry Community Shop welcomes EU delegation

An ageing population is a challenge faced by many global economies. Based on the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and European Commission figures, the number of those who are 65 and over is set to almost treble to 1.6 million people in the next 35 years in Ireland and, by 2060 one in three Europeans will be over 65.

Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence hosted a European partner meeting and conference on February 5 and 6. The Hincks Centre is exploring the value of this Silver Economy in the region, and across Europe, as part of a European Interreg co-funded project. The Silver Economy refers to the economic opportunities that arise from expenditure related to population ageing.

Headed by Dr Helen McGuirk, the Hincks Centre is one of nine European Union (EU) partners who will participate in the interregional meeting and conference. The EU delegation including representatives from France, Spain, Slovenia, Poland, Sweden and Portugal will visit Courtmacsherry as part of the two-day visit to Cork.

Courtmacsherry Community Shop Co-Operative was submitted as a Good Practice as part of a European Interreg project. This is an example of a community initiative supporting local micro enterprises operating in the Silver economy. The Good Practice is now published on the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform, which is available to policymakers around Europe. An Interreg Europe expert who reviewed the Good Practice commented, "This community shop could be of great interest to policy makers and other communities seeking innovative solutions applicable to small

rural areas."

The group will also visit Bandon to experience activities involved in their 'Age Friendly Town', a Cork County Council initiative.

Over the two days, Good Practices of SMEs supplying the Silver Economy will be presented from around Europe with the objective of aiding the design of regional action plans and influencing regional policies. Commenting on the event, the conference organiser and researcher at the Hincks Centre, Dr Aisling Conway-Lenihan, said she is looking forward to welcoming EU partners, policy makers, researchers and SMEs



CIT Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence hosted a European partner meeting and conference, headed up by Dr Helen McGuirk (seated second from left), to explore the value of the Silver Economy.

to CIT for a productive two days of engagement and collaboration. "We are delighted to bring our European partners to Courtmacsherry, as an example of a community coming together to combat rural decline."

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**Margaret Murphy O'Mahony TD**

## West Cork needs to play a part in a new beginning

Now is a time of new beginnings, as the beautiful West Cork countryside starts to wake up from its winter slumber. As a nation we will also have somewhat of a new beginning, as we vote in a new government.

The office of mayor in Clonakilty is a non-political

one and rightfully so. Therefore as mayor, I would like to wish all of the candidates the very best in the upcoming election. However I would like to highlight some issues that are important to West Cork in the hope that you might highlight them to your representatives whenever you get the chance. It

will be difficult for me to keep this non-partisan but I think that the issues are all ones that every party should get behind.

Of course the health service, tax rates, Brexit and housing are some of the main issues of the election and are crucial to West Cork's people but these have been discussed at length in the media, so I will cover some of the other ones.

Firstly, one issue that I think needs to be discussed more is the insurance crisis. This is spiralling out of control and is affecting our daily lives. It has closed some beloved businesses and many more are in danger of sadly closing too. Our sports clubs, festivals and voluntary groups are also being forced to the brink by it. It has gotten to the stage where a dedicated minister needs to be appointed to tackle the crisis. The duty of care needs to be rebalanced,



### A MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Michael O'Neill jnr.

Mayor of Clonakilty Michael O'Neill jnr highlights some of the important issues facing Clonakilty and West Cork and how we can make improvements to our local areas.

pay outs capped, legal fees reduced, fraud investigated and price gouging stopped, while making Ireland more attractive for insurance companies to enter the market and provide

competition. The very fabric of our society is crumbling at the seams due to the insurance crisis. No nightclubs, no taxis, children not being allowed to run in some schools, festivals disappearing, the list goes on and on of things being affected. It has to stop and we have to make this a top priority for politicians.

Secondly, I would like to see more of a focus on rural jobs. Increasing the population of young people in our communities by providing opportunities to work is key to having a thriving society locally. I believe that a focus on IT jobs where people can work from home would be one of the best ways to achieve this. It has never been easier to work from home and the government needs to encourage businesses and employees in the cities to relocate to places like West Cork. This could be done via tax breaks and creating an agency to promote working from home.

Farming and food businesses are some of the largest

employers in rural places like West Cork so they need to be supported.

The environment is thankfully getting more attention but we need to do more. Ireland imports a huge amount of fossil fuel energy from abroad. Now is the time to heavily invest in renewables like wind, wave and solar while doing other things like retrofitting houses to reduce our carbon footprint while drastically reducing our imports to keep more money in our country.

Finally, elections are extremely important times and I do hope that we get a very large turnout to support our freedom to vote, especially during this time marking the centenary of the War of Independence. West Cork played a crucial role in this struggle for freedom and many sacrifices were made, so it is important that we honour the amazing people who lived during that time by coming out and voting in large numbers.

Cllr. Paul **Hayes**

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ON FEB 8<sup>TH</sup>**

**Cork South West**  
📞 086 858 9019  
✉️ paul.hayes@sinnfein.ie

I'm respectfully asking you for your vote on Feb 8th. If you haven't voted for me or my party previously, please lend me your vote on this occasion, I won't let you down.

*Go raibh maith agaibh, Paul*

## A message from Paul Hayes – Sinn Fein candidate for Cork South West

**M**y name is Paul Hayes and I am the Sinn Féin candidate for Cork South West, in Saturday's election.

My team and I have met many of you during our canvass of the constituency over the last few weeks. Apologies if I missed you. I'm using this opportunity to make my final pitch to you before you cast your vote.

It's time for change. Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have been in Government for decades. They've had their chance.

Over the last three weeks, I have heard these words countless times, as you welcomed me into your homes,

workplaces and communities. I have listened as you told me about the struggle to keep a roof over your head, concerns about childcare, mean cuts to those with disabilities, elderly relatives left on hospital trollies, out-of-control insurance costs driving your business to the wall and the worry of having to work into your 70s just to survive.

People ask, if the economy is strong, why are ordinary people not feeling it; who is benefitting?

I'm asking you to give Sinn Féin the chance to show what can be done when a party in government actually cares about you.

We want to get in there to

fix things, and I believe that we have the team to do it. Our plans are ambitious and we know it won't be easy. But they are fair, sensible, costed and achievable.

We will reduce rents and freeze them. We will guarantee your right to a pension at 65. We will begin the work to deliver 100,000 homes. We will re-open closed hospital beds, and enhance services locally, especially at Bantry Hospital. We will abolish the USC on the first €30,000 of your income and we will end the insurance rip off. We will support and invest in tourism initiatives and measures to protect our environment.

We can do this but we need your support. It's not enough

to talk about change, come out and vote for change. On Saturday, please use your vote, and give me your number one vote, or very best preference. I have worked hard for you and your community as a County Councillor. I'd love to be given the opportunity to work for you at national level, as your TD. Please give me that chance, I won't let you down.

Go raibh mile maith agat.  
Thanks  
Cllr Paul Hayes,  
West Cork Municipal District,  
Cork County Council.  
086-8589019

**BERNIE  
CONNOLLY**

YOUR GREEN PARTY CANDIDATE FOR CORK SOUTH WEST

**VOTE NO.1 ON FEB 8<sup>TH</sup>**

**To ensure a thriving future for our children and grandchildren**

📧 bcmpho@gmail.com    📱 @BConnollyGP    📄 POSTER-FREE CAMPAIGN

## Why Vote Green in GE2020

**B**ernie Connolly, current Coordinator of Cork Environmental Forum, has been added to the Green Party ticket in Cork, being formally announced as the party's candidate to contest the Cork South West constituency.

The Glengarriff-native, who currently lives in Kilcolman, has spent 40 years living and working in West Cork and says her varied experience and ability to influence and direct policy would make her an effective TD for the region:

"From what I have heard on the doorsteps and seen for myself Cork South West is an area that could really benefit from Green Party policies to address the Climate Crisis and our Biodiversity Crisis, which in turn addresses the local

needs for jobs, quality housing, and supporting services and the revival of local communities".

People are concerned with regard to travel and heating down the line, as fossil fuels become more expensive. Our transport policy will give people more choice with greater investment into more frequent, reliable and affordable public transport with greater connectivity for instance between villages such as Drimoleague with its traditional service town of Skibbereen; and there are co-benefits for health, air quality and social cohesion with our active travel policy.

The majority of housing stock and buildings will be here in 2050 and we need to transition our heating systems to renewable sources. There is a

requirement to retrofit but also for local production and both offer jobs in an area crying out for more employment opportunities. These are climate change actions; we have made some inroads with electricity but we do not have any time to waste in making the necessary steps over the next five years to transition to more sustainable options and to invest so that we support people in doing so.

This area has a wealth of assets, land and food production, our coastal and marine area and fishing, our attractiveness for tourism and a wealth of history, culture and arts but perhaps most of all the innovative spirit and resilience of the people who choose to live here.

We want to address the biodiversity crisis, which is

critical to lowering carbon in the atmosphere and providing us with clean air, clean water, healthy soils and food and the basis of our health and well-being. We want to ensure that our farmers and our fishermen are supported and paid for the goods and services they provide and protect.

Ultimately I want to be a strong Green voice for this region, which I believe can benefit from Green policies and I believe Cork South West is ready for change and wants to play its part in addressing the dual crises we face together across our Country and the entire globe.

## Cork South West families under pressure as childcare crisis escalates – O’Sullivan

Fianna Fáil General Election candidate for Cork South West Cllr. Christopher O’Sullivan has called for sweeping reforms of the childcare and pre-school sector, as childcare providers across the county struggle with exorbitant insurance premiums and heavy regulation.

The Clonakilty based candidate says that in some cases, creches have been forced to reduce childcare places, restrict or close their baby rooms or shut down altogether because they simply cannot cope with the high cost of doing business.

“This is happening at a time when we already had far too little creche and pre-school

places to cope with the demand from families. And in the past year, the situation has gone from bad to worse. I know families who have been left with no place at all for their babies and pre-school children. This is before you even look at creche fees which are an incredible burden on families,” Cllr. O’Sullivan said.

“There is now only one childcare insurer in Ireland. Premiums have doubled, and even tripled in some cases. This is happening at a time when the burden of increased regulation left many providers drowning in paperwork before Christmas, with some creches being de-registered by Tusla without warning

and often over a timing issue rather than serious regulation breaches.

“The frontline childcare workers themselves are on average wages of €12 per hour, with many not paid for holidays or training days. These frontline staff are overworked, underpaid and are leaving the sector, putting it in further crisis.

“Cork South West will lose more childcare places, and parents will be driven out of the workplace due to childcare issues, unless we look at reforming this sector in a real way. The cost is too high for business and the cost is too high for parents,” said Cllr. O’Sullivan.

## FF will secure the future of fishing communities – Murphy O’Mahony

Fianna Fáil TD for Cork South West Margaret Murphy O’Mahony says her party is committed to a strong and vibrant fishing industry and will support coastal communities in West Cork and right across the country.

Deputy Murphy O’Mahony said, “Fishing is the lifeblood of so many communities in West Cork but the sector has been so badly neglected by Fine Gael over the past nine years. It’s important that fishing families are supported. This will be particularly important in the aftermath of Brexit.

“Fianna Fáil has set out a series of measures which it will protect our fishing communities, including a commitment to review the Sea Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act and the introduction of a fair penalty points system for Irish fishermen.

“We will also increase funding for the Marine Institute by €3m to boost research.

“Brexit will also pose challenges for our fishing communities, not least the Bill published by the UK government to restrict European fishing vessels from UK waters. Fianna Fáil will

safeguard Irish interests in future EU-UK discussions by fighting for reciprocal access to fishing waters and protect Ireland’s quota.

“I will also be pushing for the development of Schull Harbour and marina if elected to government. This project has the potential to create as many as 200 jobs during construction and up to 400 once it’s completed.

“This is a significant tourism and business initiative and would bring a huge boost to the West Cork region,” concluded Deputy Murphy O’Mahony.

## It’s time to shout ‘stop’...and rebuild our rural communities

On Monday morning February 3, at an organic farm on the Turk Head Peninsula, Cllr Holly Cairns, the Social Democrats Spokesperson on Agriculture and Cork South West General Election candidate, launched the Party’s policy document ‘Building Sustainable Rural Communities.’

Cllr. Holly Cairns said: “For too long, rural development has been framed as some sort of urban rural divide. However, the quality of life issues that people have in urban areas are no less felt within rural communities. Costs of childcare, commutes to work, affordable housing, access to good quality healthcare or disability services are core concerns of people all across West Cork. The impact of these challenges can be felt differently in rural communities, leading to de-population, isolation and mental challenges.

“It’s time to shout stop, to

have a government who will have a clear focus on ideas and innovations that are specifically designed to halt the decline in our rural communities.

“We’re putting forward solutions, which include investment in good quality public services, accessible local transport that links our towns and villages, investment that builds new economic and job creation opportunities and regeneration measures for our towns.

“We also need strong supports for our agriculture and fisheries sectors, the lifeblood of our rural communities. Change is coming and we want to bring solutions that don’t involve a cliff-edge with no supports or alternatives in place. These solutions should be fair, not only to our current farmers, but to the next generation of farmers too. To achieve this, we need robust and sustainable support from the state. It is not too late to save our rural communities.”

Catherine Murphy, the party’s co-leader added

“What Ireland does best is community. It’s something that must be nurtured and supported in order to thrive. For too long, successive governments have put rural communities on the back burner. This lack of attention and targeted investment has led to unbalanced regional development and a hollowing out of many of our rural communities.

“We need to invest in the kinds of services that allow people to live and thrive outside of urban areas. This means decent health services that are focused on primary care, affordable good quality housing, and childcare services that give people the opportunity to take up paid employment. If we invest in good quality public services, we will create an environment where our rural communities can rebuild and thrive again.”

**Margaret Murphy O'Mahony**

Vótáil 1

Please continue your preference for Christopher O'Sullivan

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THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

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If you want change, vote for it.

**Holly CAIRNS**

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**Social Democrats**



## THE HISTORY & POLITICS CORNER

Shane Daly

Shane Daly is a History Graduate from University College Cork, with a BAM in History and an MA in Irish History.

“I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgement of God on these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands with so much innocent blood; and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future, which are satisfactory grounds for such actions which cannot otherwise but work remorse and regret.” – Oliver Cromwell

Last Thursday (30/01/2020) marked 359 years since the body of Oliver Cromwell was exhumed from its grave, dragged from its last resting spot, through the streets of London, hanged at Tyburn and then thrown into a pit. Not before his head was cut off and skewered on a six-metre pole on the roof of Westminster Hall where it stayed for 24 years until it was removed in 1685. The head then went into the hands of private collectors and museums until 1960 when it was re-buried. What has this got to do with a Credit Union in the Caribbean you ask? Well, Cromwell spent a lifetime persecuting and killing but paid particular attention to the Irish, and even more so Irish Catholics. There are two particular instances in history

# Caribbean Credit Union

where we can read first-hand accounts of this persecution and both are linked.

Drogheda in County Louth in 1649 was under the control of an English soldier named Arthur Aston. The town of Drogheda had 10 large defensive gates. One remains today in the town, you pass under it driving through. Aston's main weapon of defence was to close the gates of the towers, trying to hold the fort until the attacking enemy ran out of supplies and starved or gave up and retreated. His army could also take up position in the towers along the high walls that surrounded the town and fire arrows etcetera at the intruder. Cromwell knew this. He decided he wanted Drogheda under his control, as it was on the river Boyne and it would be useful. This became known as 'The Siege of Drogheda' and remains even today as one of the most brutal events in history. Having sailed from England with 12,000 men and not enough supplies, he knew he would have to take the town quickly so as the men would not starve, they could then re-stock, take control of the town and move on elsewhere. Aston had 3,000 men at his disposal and his army would soon prove to be no match. Cromwell asked Arthur Aston to surrender the town by way of letter. A soldier dispatched this through one of the gates of the town.

“Sir, having brought the army of the Parliament of England before this place, to reduce it to obedience, to the end that the effusion of blood may be prevented, I thought fit to summon you to deliver the same into my hands to their use. If this be refused, you will have no cause to blame me.” – Cromwell

Aston refused to surrender and Cromwell's men attacked.

They quickly blew the town to pieces by way of cannon. When the down's defence mechanism had crumbled under cannon fire, Cromwell marched his 12,000 men towards the gates of Drogheda. After gaining entry to the town Cromwell ordered his men to kill all inhabitants. Of the 3,000 inside the gate 2869 had their throats cut and 30 were taken prisoner. Arthur Aston was killed but his throat was not cut, Aston had a wooden leg and he was beaten to death with it. The 30 that were taken prisoner are the key here. The key to what was a common occurrence in the 17th century. Cromwell often took prisoners and sent them as slaves or indentured servants to the Caribbean islands. There was high demand for slaves and indentured servants on the islands at the time and Cromwell took advantage of this.

Cromwell makes reference to this on September 16, 1649 in a letter he wrote after the Siege of Drogheda:

“I believe we put to the sword the whole number of the defendants. I do not think thirty of the whole number escaped with their lives. Those that did, are in safe custody for the Barbadoes.”

Montserrat in the 17th century was a British Colony and it still is today. Of the Caribbean islands it was here the majority of Irish slaves or indentured servants were sent. After battles or sieges anyone that Cromwell decided to take prisoner, he would send to Montserrat. Over the period of many years, people from all over Ireland that were taken prisoner were soon after shipped to Montserrat. However, a large proportion of the men and women sent to Montserrat were from Munster but particularly Cork and Waterford. From the 1630s, offi-

cial accounts record the arrival of the Irish in the Caribbean, many of them kidnapped by press-gangs operating in the vicinity of the principal ports in Munster. The journey across the Atlantic took almost three months, and those who survived the crossing found living and working conditions on the plantations extremely harsh. The difference between slavery and indentured servitude was that with the latter you had the possibility of release. The Irish were mostly indentured servants and after seven years of service, a handful did acquire small landholdings, but none that we know of ever returned to Ireland.

Montserrat became known as 'The Emerald Isle of the Caribbean' and still carries that moniker in the 21st century.

The island of Montserrat is 39 square miles and of the 10,000 inhabitants in the 17th century, 70 per cent were Irish. After serving their period of indentured servitude or after many uprisings, the Irish came to take over the island and took the land for themselves. There was an enormous sugar and tobacco trade and the Irish that had taken over the plantations needed people to work the land, so the cycle of slavery continued. This production of sugar was fuelled by planters with Irish descent with over a third of the island's sugar estates being run by Irish families. Some wealthy Irish merchant families set up plantations and networks in the Caribbean, which provided employment for the thousands of Irish immigrants willing to travel to Montserrat. Almost half of the whole population of the West Indies by the mid-seventeenth century were Irish. By 1730 Montserrat's economy was almost entirely dependent on this industry, which resulted in a change in the population



The flag of Montserrat has a lady playing a harp as its emblem. If you fly there tomorrow, when you pass through immigration the stamp you will get on your passport has the outline of a shamrock. There is even a Montserrat Credit Union.

demographics, as more slaves from Africa were required as labourers to keep the booming industry going. The decline of the sugar industry resulting in a decline of the number of labourers needed from 1735 onwards saw a decrease in sugar production, which had detrimental effects on those relying on it as a source of income. Slavery was abolished in Montserrat in 1834.

Throughout this time the Irish that were indentured servants had relationships with the locals and had children. As did the Irish in later years that became plantation bosses and the descendants of these Irish people still live in Montserrat today. The Irish connection and history is evident all over the island. Today if you pick up the telephone directory in Montserrat names of the families you will read include, Farrell, Riley, Kirwan, Sweeney, Browne, O' Gara, O' Connor, Fitzgerald, Broderick, Reid, Galway and Daly, as well as more.

If place names can signify Irishness, southern Montserrat is the most Irish. Here we can find the town of Kinsale, perhaps named by nostalgic exiles for their last sight of

Ireland. The road that leaves Kinsale takes you passed Broderick's Estate and the passed Reid's Estate. Next you come to St. Patrick's village. After that you come to Galway Estate; named by the Galway family that became sugar planters in Montserrat in the 17th century. The flag of Montserrat has a lady playing a harp as its emblem. If you fly there tomorrow, when you pass through immigration the stamp you will get on your passport has the outline of a shamrock. There is even a Montserrat Credit Union. It really is remarkable. On YouTube there is a brief but brilliant documentary on the island called 'The Emerald Isle of the Caribbean' our president, albeit a little it more fresh-faced, is the presenter. Here you will see all of the above but probably the most remarkable facet to it all are the interviews with the locals and how they speak with an Irish accent. It truly is amazing and even more fascinating when you know of the island's history and why 400 years later the locals of a little Caribbean Island speak with a Cork accent.



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## Sod turned at Clonakilty Community Hospital extension

Minister for Older People Jim Daly last week turned the sod on a new 20-bed extension at Clonakilty Community Hospital. The large 1,690 square metre extension, to the rear of the existing building, will contain 20 single en-suite rooms, which will allow residents to have greater privacy and dignity.

Once the project is completed, it will improve the patients experience by reducing the number of beds in the multi-occupancy rooms.

Site-clearing works are already underway on the €5 million project. The extension is

part of an ongoing programme of improvements and upgrades at the community hospital. Construction work will begin in the next few months on a smaller building project, which will provide communal spaces for residents, close to some of the existing bedrooms.

In recent months, a programme of upgrades at the existing building has allowed for the creation of welcoming new living spaces, which residents are now using and enjoying – including a new quiet space, which residents have named 'The Atlantic Way'.



Ger Reaney, Chief Officer Cork Kerry Community Health-care and Minister Jim Daly.



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## Thanking local historical societies – look what you give us



### THE HISTORY SHOW

Kieran Doyle

There probably isn't a week goes by, where some history lecture is to be found in the towns of villages of Cork. It's something that could be taken for granted but based on the crowded attendances of two recent lectures, history is becoming more popular than ever. Last month there were two fascinating lectures, one in Rosscarbery and the other Clonakilty, which fortunately we can bring to you on westcorkfm.ie. Thanks to Rosscarbery and District Historical Society and Duchas Clonakilty who organised and hosted the lectures, we can hear Lieutenant Brett of the Irish navy on the history of Hawlbowlne and Michael Linehan on the burning of Cork in 1920. Indeed, I missed the latter lecture, so thanks to Kevin Herlihy for recording it. It shows the importance of having an archive online of all these wonderful lectures and interviews which you will find in our listen back section on westcorkfm.ie.

Lieutenant Brett's lecture takes us from the 1600s up to modern times. In those early days, this island, based in the world's second largest natural harbour, initially went through a cycle of fortification, disrepair and abandonment. The oldest yacht club in the world is currently harboured in Crosshaven, but it was at Hawlbowlne where, established by wealthy habitants in the area, the club began its life as the 'Water Club' in 1720.

Lt Brett explains that Kinsale, which was originally Corks' major port, was becoming unsuitable for increased shipping. After an extensive survey by the Royal Navy in 1795, Hawlbowlne was selected as the appropriate base. After the construction of the dockyard, it became a place where ships went for repair, fuel and to use the naval hospital at the base, rather than function as any significant naval headquarters. As time went on, there was a Martello tower created with a 25 pounder cannon. This was particularly useful if ships tried to leave Cork City and the harbour master wanted them stopped at Hawlbowlne. What followed next in the Islands evolution was the relocation of the magazine stores and gunpowder to a nearby island – Rocky Island.

During the Great Hunger [Can we really call it a famine when food was plentiful for those who could afford it, grain was exported and the markets protected by the British Government?], it was a place where great stores of grain were kept, tactically, so the staving masses

could not access it. Lt Brett believes that from then on, the island was always tainted from a local point of view because of that association. Convict labour was from neighbouring Spike Island, was often used to build the infrastructure on Hawlbowlne and indeed at one stage a bridge was constructed between the islands so the convicts could come and go from one island to the other to work. From the 1800s, the Royal navy became more interested in Hawlbowlne than any time before and renewed construction occurred. In 1865, a new dock yard and dry dock was built, and the 2000 convicts in Spike were the perfect workforce. Interestingly, there was also an RIC barracks built on the island.

Submarines and USA warships were in anchor around Hawlbowlne during the Great War, such was its importance – something the British knew too well. Even after independence in 1922, Cork Harbour and Hawlbowlne remained under British control up to 1938, until the 'treaty ports' were handed over to the Irish Free State. Lt Brett also brings us up to date with the Irish navy at Hawlbowlne since 1945. For anyone interested in naval and maritime history, make sure you tune in.

Just a quick mention about Michael Lenihan's lecture on the burning of Cork City on December 1920. Michael's lecture was complete with an array of a vast amount of photos and images. Outside of the wanton destruction and vandalism inflicted on Cork, it was

significant for its far-reaching effect on public opinion around the world. How could the British allow one of Ireland's major cities, be partially burnt down, when only a few years earlier the British had called on world to unite against German troops, who were sacking and burning Belgian towns on their march to France? There has been a lot of discourse about the RIC in recent publications throughout the country and in an interesting related note, the RIC had some involvement during the burning of Cork. In my own research on the RIC, there is a report on the Cork Examiner about how members of the 'old' RIC acted on those nights. It stated, 'The old RIC men were mainly engaged in conveying to the fire brigade of further outbreaks from time to time during the night.' There is also evidence of the old RIC baton-charging British soldiers who were fighting Cork men. As a historian, I hope the fiasco that surrounded the RIC postponed commemorations, will not stop discourse about the force, which most people have only some knowledge outside the unsavoury entry of the thugish Black and Tans into the equation. Local commemorations to old RIC men in recent times in Castletownbere and Soloheadbeg, have shown, contrary to what some politicians clumsily perceive and narrowly define as 'celebration', were actually done to mark history, and to remember the human cost of conflict – That someone's enemy, is someone else's, father, mother, brother, sister. Enjoy the lectures on westcorkfm.ie.

## West Cork Women Against Violence receives vital donation from Skibbereen Masonic Lodge



West Cork Women against Violence (WCWAV) last month received a donation of €1,000 from Skibbereen Masonic Lodge last month. The money was presented to Marie Mulholland, co-ordinator of WCWAV by Patrick Evans, a member of the Lodge, and will be used to provide counselling services to women and children.

"The Skibbereen Masonic Lodge supports many local charities and when they heard our counselling budget was running out immediately offered this relief," Marie said.

WCWAV has been established for 20 years and deals with approximately 200 women and up to 500 children affected each year. Based in Bantry, the organisation is run by Marie as full-time coordinator, three part-time support workers, and one part-time administrator. A diverse range of experts sits on the board of Directors, including an abuse survivor and a member of An Garda Síochána.

Rental and core costs for running WCWAV are provided by TUSLA, the Child and Family Protection Agency.

"We offer various out-reach programmes; parenting, counselling, schools programme, and help with housing, but the lack of a safe house in West Cork is a major drawback," explains Marie.

"The only safe house currently available to us is located in Cork City and seldom has places for our clients from West Cork."

The good news is that WCWAV has received funding to establish a safe house in West Cork. Once established, the next challenge will be to equip it and fund its on-going running costs.

Marie says that acts of kindness, like voluntary donations, are a lifeline to organisations such as West Cork Women against Violence. "We very much hope that the community and charitable organisations, such as the Masonic Lodge, will continue to support us as they have so generously in the past."

## Centenary of attack on Allihies Barracks

On February 12, 1920, the IRA attacked and disabled Allihies Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) Barracks. Amateur historian **Pauline Murphy** outlines the events of that night 100 years ago this month.

The plan to attack the RIC Barracks in Allihies with an explosive mine built from material smuggled out of the Bere Island British Army Garrison by Republican sympathisers, was first devised by IRA Volunteers Christopher O'Connell, Cornelius Sullivan and Joseph Foley.

The attacking party itself consisted of 20 Volunteers from Ballineen, Clogagh, Ballinspittle, Barryroe and Kilbrittain, led by Sean Hales. The party assembled at Inches at 8pm before marching off across the countryside to Allihies, some seven miles away. When they reached their destination they placed the mine at the gable wall of the Barracks but it did not go off as intended; some quick thinking was needed and the volunteers managed to find some hay to cover the mine,

which was then set alight and BANG!

The explosion blew a hole in the gable wall and knocked the occupants of the Barracks out of their beds. Debris and smoke smothered the building as the IRA men advanced and fired whilst the RIC men scrambled for their arms to return fire.

Thirty-two-year-old Constable Michael Neenan was a County Clare native who worked as a farm labourer before joining the RIC in 1907. He was running to secure the Arms Room when a bullet pierced his abdomen. Michael died the following day from his injury.

The firefight went on for hours, as the building crumbled under the flames; Sergeant Thomas Nugent and Constable O'Driscoll received wounds in the fight but survived. The RIC

finally surrendered and escaped the destroyed barracks leaving Hales and his men to ensure its total destruction.

The Barracks was abandoned – its remaining sergeant and constables moved to Castle-townbere and never returned to Allihies. The Barracks building remained a shell until it was rebuilt by the Irish Free State in 1922 and occupied by An Garda Síochána.

An inquest followed the attack on Allihies; Sergeant Nugent attended and gave a witness statement. He stated, "There was a terrific explosion at the back wall of the Barracks, immediately in front of where I was sleeping, and a large portion of the wall collapsed and I was practically knocked out of bed. Part of the upper floor collapsed to a certain extent opposite the breach. I got up off the floor and crossed the breach to join the rest of my men."

Years later IRA Volunteer

Christopher O'Connell recalled the attack on Allihies Barracks in his Military Witness statement. Regarding Sergeant Nugent, O'Connell described him as "a cool, daring man; we knew he would be a dangerous antagonist." On the death of Constable Neenan, O'Connell stated, "One of the garrison was killed; he was a game scraper, and may he also rest in peace."

Following the weeks following the attack, the IRA, again led by Sean Hales, attacked Timoleague and Mount Pleasant Barracks in the same fashion while a similar attack was carried out at the same time on Castlemartyr Barracks by the East Cork IRA. These attacks were some of the first actions sanctioned by the IRA HQ in Dublin – not that the West Cork Brigade needed any permission from Dublin to play a pivotal role in Ireland's fight for freedom.

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# Making it Happen with Local Enterprise Week 2020 this March

Local Enterprise Week 2020 ‘# Making it Happen’ runs from March 2 to 6. One of the highlight events for the week will take place on Friday, March 6, with International Women’s Day 2020 celebrated at the Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery. The event will include networking, as well as a panel discussion and keynote speakers. It is open to women in business across all sectors, whether you are an entrepreneur with a business idea, a new start-up or an established business. The event will cost just €30 to attend and will include a lunch.

MC on the day will be Deirdre O’Shaughnessy, the editor and sometimes presenter of Cork’s leading daily talk show, the 96fm Opinion Line. She is a regular panellist and contributor on radio and TV shows, as well as a freelance journalist for a number of national publications.

Keynote speakers will include award-winning retailer Jean McCabe from Willow in Ennis. Jean will share her knowledge about how trading online works for her business and how it has greatly increased revenue for the business. Plus she has some marketing, promotion and customer service tips that could be used across any sector.

Leaving behind a career in Engineering, the shop Willow was born in 2007. Starting out as a 21-year-old, with no experience, Jean fell in love with retail and grew Willow into the Retail Experience it is today. Winner of the Retail Excellence ‘National Store of the Year 2019’ shows that a small business can compete, you just need to know how to do it!

The second keynote speaker on the day will be Wicklow-based Margaret Hoctor, Kilmullen Lamb. Having faced redundancy from a Senior Director role in 2013 in a leading Global Market Research company, she found herself reviewing her situation and decided, along with her husband, to build the farm business. Fast forward seven years and they have diversified into lamb direct, where all their lamb is sold in full boxes, half boxes from the farm, online or in pieces in farmers markets.

Margaret is also a trainer coach and speaker and, when not lambing and working on the farm, is a trainer with the Entrepreneurs Academy, sharing what her learnings are in ‘real time’ with start-up’s. Margaret recently spoke at the Women in Ag conference in Sligo where over 600 women attended. Her story is told with honesty, humour and passion.



Deirdre O’Shaughnessy, 96FM. Photo: Donal O’Leary

Margaret is delighted to speak about her experience to-date sharing her learnings along the way in both being in retail and farmers markets and how she has found that what is between our ears and our mindset is what matters most when it comes to self-belief expansion and growth.

The panel discussion on the day will include West Cork women in business ‘on the couch discussion’ with Deirdre O’Shaughnessy. Including Caroline Murphy, Owner of West Cork Eggs and President of Network Ireland West Cork

plus Katy Waering, Director of OMKO Ltd Bantry. Both Caroline and Katy are inspirational and uplifting speakers who will share their business stories while giving tips on what supports are available in Cork for women in business. Bookings are now open for this event from the website.

Free business advice clinics will take place throughout the week in Clonakilty, Dunmanway, Kinsale and Skibbereen. Free website advice clinics will also be run in Dunmanway.

A trading online voucher information seminar will take



Jean Mc Cabe, owner of Willow Boutique, Ennis and Galway, photographed in the Ennis store. Pic: John Kelly.

place in Dunmanway. The vouchers are used to support small businesses looking to enhance their online trading presence. The vouchers offer financial assistance of 50 per cent of expenditure to trade online up to a maximum of €2,500. Come along to the seminar to find out if your business is eligible for this funding.

A free Brexit customs workshop will be run in Clonakilty. Regardless of a hard or soft Customs Brexit, goods to/from the UK or transiting through the UK will be subject to strict compliance and documentation requirements.

On Monday, March 2, there will be a morning networking

event in Mallow ‘The Only Way is Up’ with keynote speaker Pat Falvey followed by speed networking. West Cork clients are encouraged to attend this event to meet with businesses they may not already know in the North Cork area. The event is open to all sectors, whether you are an entrepreneur, start-up or an established business.

Bookings for all events are available from the website and many of the events are FREE with pre-registration required for all events.

[www.localenterprise.ie/corknorthandwest](http://www.localenterprise.ie/corknorthandwest)  
Or call 023-8834700.



LOCAL  
ENTERPRISE  
WEEK 2020  
Making It Happen

## Local Enterprise Week 2020

(2nd-6th March)

### Schedule of Events:



Cork  
County Council  
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

#### Monday 2nd March:

##### FREE Brexit Customs Training Workshop

Location: Fernhill House Hotel, Clonakilty  
Time: 9.30am-4.30pm

##### FREE Business Advice Clinics

Location: Brookpark Business Centre, Dunmanway  
Time: One hour appointments throughout the day

##### Speed Networking Event “The only way is up”

Keynote speaker Pat Falvey.

Pat is a high-altitude mountaineer, polar explorer, expedition leader, author, corporate and motivational speaker.

Location: Springfort Hall Hotel, Mallow  
Time: 8.00am-11.00am Cost: €10 per person

#### Tuesday 3rd March

##### FREE Business Advice Clinics

Location: LEO Office, Clonakilty  
Time: One hour appointments throughout the day

#### Wednesday 4th March

##### FREE Business Advice Clinics

Location: The Ludgate Hub, Skibbereen  
Time: One hour appointments throughout the day

#### Thursday 5th March

##### FREE Business Advice Clinics

Location: The Ludgate Hub, Skibbereen  
Time: One hour appointments throughout the day

#### Friday 6th March

##### International Women’s Day Networking Event

Location: Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery  
Time: Registration from 9.00am with a 9.30am start and a 2.00pm finish  
Cost: €30 per person and includes lunch

##### FREE Trading Online Voucher Information Seminar

Location: Brookpark Business Centre, Dunmanway  
Time: 9.30am-11.00am

##### FREE Website Advice Clinics

Location: Brookpark Business Centre, Dunmanway  
Time: One hour appointments from 11.30am-4.45pm

##### FREE Business Advice Clinics

Location: The Trident Hotel, Kinsale  
Time: One hour appointments throughout the day

Bookings and payments for all events are available only from our website: [www.localenterprise.ie/corknorthandwest](http://www.localenterprise.ie/corknorthandwest)

Contact us today for more information:

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# West Cork business women get goal ready for 2020

Network Ireland West Cork is continuing to support and inspire ambitious and enterprising women in business. The first event of the year entitled 'Getting Goal Ready for 2020' was held at Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery last month. Guest speakers included Katherine O'Sullivan of O'Donnell Design and Sarah Abbott and Margaret Quane of The People's Practice, who each shared their experience of why goal-setting is vital to succeed. The group were welcomed by newly elected branch president Caroline Murphy, who said "We all have something to give, we all have something to share, we all inspire each other and this helps us to be the best we can. Being the best 'YOU' means different things to all and it is about what matters to you. What are your ambitions, your dreams, your goals? It is also about following your passion, your path and no-one else's." She added how the information shared at the event will inspire others to follow those ambitions and truly become the best version of themselves.

Katherine O'Sullivan, Gener-

al Manager of Growing Manufacturing Business O'Donnell Design Limited in Skibbereen and winner of the National Business Woman of the Year 2019 Shining Star Employee spoke at the event; she inspired those attending explaining how she has three main principals that work for her in goal setting. Firstly be around people that bring out the best in you and let go of boundaries holding you back. Secondly try to implement as many healthy habits as you can in work, home and family life, starting with exercise a few times a week, eating a healthy diet and always try to get a good night sleep to care for your body and mind. Lastly, she open-heartedly said that when you support yourself to be resilient in challenging times, it will reward you to bounce back quicker, to strive further, to achieve your goal and to #BeTheBestYou.

Sarah Abbott, who leads The People Practice, a boutique consulting organisation specialising in executive coaching and HR Strategy, shared her experience and tips for goal setting, saying "Firstly get clear on your WHY and your com-



Pictured at Network Ireland West Cork's first meeting of 2020 were (l-r) Sarah Abbott, Claire-Marie Barton, Caroline Murphy NIWC President, Katherine O'Sullivan, Michelle Howard Ryan and Sarah Quane. Photo By Dermot Sullivan

elling reason and only after that, can you think of reaching your goal." Sarah added how its vital to be very clear on your values, know where you want to go and then goals become more achievable and she high-

lighted that the more positive your goals are, the more real they become.

The next branch event will celebrate the launch of the Network Ireland Awards, with guest speakers and a panel

of past award entrants and winners. Booking is now open on event brite for the awards launch, which takes place at AIB, Bandon on Thursday, February 27. Network Ireland West Cork is encouraging

members to enter the regional awards, for more information about Network Ireland, future events and becoming a member, visit [www.networkireland.ie](http://www.networkireland.ie).

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### Language exemption

**Q: My son is exempted from studying Irish. Can he still**

**go on to study at third level?**

**A:** Students must have the academic entry requirements (also called matriculation requirements) for the third level course they want to take. You

can get detailed information on these requirements directly from the universities, technological universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education.

If a certain mark in the Irish Leaving Certificate exam is a matriculation requirement, students who had an exemption from the study of Irish may also be exempted from this requirement.

Exemptions from Irish matriculation requirements may be granted, for example, to a student who was born outside Ireland, was educated wholly or partly outside Ireland or who has a specific learning disability. This is a matter for each individual college.

All students applying for a third-level course through the Central Applications Office (CAO) should send a copy of their exemption certificate with their CAO application form.

The college may also ask the student to complete a separate exemption application form and to submit supporting documentation. You should check with the individual college for details on how to apply for an exemption.

Further information is available from the Citizens Information Centre below.

### Advocacy Service in West Cork

**Q. If I feel I have been treated unfairly or have been refused an entitlement what support is there to enable me to assert my rights?**

**A.** As part of its work, the local Citizens Information Service provides a free, independent and confidential advocacy service to people who need support or non-legal representation in accessing their rights and entitlements.

Citizens Information may be able to advocate and help you if you find yourself in difficulty including finding yourself in any of the following situations: You feel that have been treated unfairly and need help to assert your rights; You been refused a social welfare payment or have you had your payment stopped; You feel that you are being treated unfairly at work; You are having housing difficulties or at risk of homelessness; You have a consumer problem

Advocacy helps you to have your voice heard on issues that are important to you. In doing advocacy, the

Citizens Information Service moves beyond providing information and advice to supporting you with more difficult issues. It is a partnership between you and the Information Provider who will work with you to achieve the best possible outcome and will take no action without your consent.

Citizens Information provides advocacy in the following ways: Writing letters with you and on your behalf; Negotiating with third parties such as employers, landlords, retailers or Government Departments on your behalf; Preparing submissions for formal appeals such as Social Welfare appeal hearings or employment hearings; Supporting/representing you in meetings with third parties; Supporting/representing you in a formal hearing such as Workplace Relations Commission hearings, Social Welfare Appeal Hearings or Residential Tenancy Board hearings.

However, Citizens Information cannot provide legal advice or represent you in civil or criminal courts. If you have a solicitor or trade union already acting for you on an issue, Citizens Information

cannot offer an advocacy service to you.

If you require advocacy support, you should contact your local Citizens Information Service and speak with an Information Provider, who will discuss your situation and ascertain if you have grounds for a case. The Information Provider will then explain the advocacy procedures to you.

*Know Your Rights has been compiled by Citizens Information West Cork, which provides a free and confidential service to the public.*

*Bantry Address: Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Co. Cork. Weekly outreach in Clonakilty, Bandon and Dunmanway. Castletownbere 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.*

*Macroom Address: South Square, Macroom. Information is also available online at [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) and from the Citizens Information Phone Service, 0761 074000.*

*West Cork Helpline: 0761078390.*

## Citizens Information

### Information, Advice & Advocacy

on many issues including the following:

- **Social Welfare Entitlements**
- **Employment Rights**
- **Family Matters**
- **Housing**
- **Assistance with preparation for social welfare appeals & employment rights appeal**

#### OFFICES IN WEST CORK

##### Bantry CIC

The Square,  
Bantry,  
Co. Cork  
Tel: 076 1078390  
Mon-Thurs: 10am-5pm  
Fridays: 10am-4pm

##### Macroom CIC

South Square,  
Macroom  
Co. Cork  
Tel: 076 1078430  
Mon-Thurs: 10am-5pm

**Bandon** c/o St Michael Centre, South Main Street  
Every Thursday from 10am-1pm & 2pm-4pm

**Castletownbere** Beara West Family Resource Centre  
Every 2nd & 4th Thursday 10am to 1pm

**Clonakilty** 16 Rossa Street  
Every Wednesday from 10am-1pm & 2pm-4pm

**Dunmanway** Ross House, The Square  
Every Monday 10am to 1pm

**Helpline: 0761 078390** National Helpline: 0761 074000  
Website: [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

## Friends of Clonakilty Day Care Centre in danger of being lost without new members

Twenty-five years ago 'Friends of Clonakilty Day Care Centre' was set up to provide the additional comforts and extras needed to ensure a meaningful and comfortable experience for the elderly members of our community and their families at the Clonakilty Day Care Centre. Sometimes an outing to the Day Care Centre may be the only interaction an elderly person may have with the outside world all week. Or, it could be the precious few hours of respite available to an overburdened carer.

In order for the continuation of the Friends of the Day Care Centre and their work, it is vital that more members of the community join the organisation.

The Day Care Centre in Clonakilty, ably run by Nurse Co-ordinator, Bernadette Edmead and her loyal co-work-

ers, Health Carers Margaret Heffernan and Berna O'Sullivan, provides an invaluable service in our community.

Due to past fundraising and extremely generous donations and support from individuals and the local community, great things have been achieved. These range from the latest large project – the outside physiotherapy area at a cost of £30,000 – to Christmas gifts for each client, entertainment and activity programmes, blankets to keep knees warm and coloured tablewear to assist those with sensory or cognitive issues.

The next proposed project is a re-vamp of the Day Care Room. If anybody has visited Mount Carmel Community Hospital recently, they will have been impressed by the high standards of decoration and comfort provided. In order to keep up with these

standards, the Day Care Centre now needs updating. A HSE-approved architect has come up with suggestions for the improvements to the room, but this all comes at a high price. While the HSE will provide some of the money required, the Friends will have to meet the large shortfall.

However, help is needed to ensure this vital voluntary service is not lost. Becoming a member of Friends of Clonakilty Day Care Centre is not a huge commitment. There are only a few meetings a year, depending on what is happening.

Anyone who is interested in joining the Friends of the Day Care Centre will be most welcome and can contact the Secretary Josie Files or any member either through the Day Care Centre on (023) 883 4606 or by email – josiefiles17@gmail.com.

## Community groups and angling clubs invited to apply for €1.3M in fisheries funding

Inland Fisheries Ireland has opened a new funding round, which is available to community groups and angling clubs across the country. The €1.3 million in funding will be awarded to fisheries conservation projects and development projects.

Applications are invited from angling clubs, local development associations, tidy towns and others who may be looking to carry out relevant projects. The 2020 funding call consists of three schemes:

### The Capital Grants Scheme 2020 (€240,000)

This scheme supports projects which will help deliver an accessible and sustainable fisheries resource for all. It is aimed specifically at capital projects which will improve angling access and infrastructure (e.g. accessible fishing stands, walkways etc).

### The Midlands Fisheries Fund (€50,000)

This scheme focuses on sustainable development works in the midland fisheries permit area. The fund has been created through contributions from the permit income received via the Midlands Fisheries Group permit area. Projects, which will be eligible to receive support will improve fish habitats in a sustainable manner (e.g. river bank protection, control of exotic species etc).

### The Salmon and Sea Trout Rehabilitation, Conservation and Protection Fund (€1 Million)

The aim of this fund is to rehabilitate, protect and conserve Salmon and Sea Trout and their habitats. This year, funding will be available for conservation projects only (e.g. fish passage improvement, spawning enhancement

etc).

Suzanne Campion, Head of Business Development at Inland Fisheries Ireland said: "We are committed to realising the potential of the fisheries resource from a social and economic perspective but also to protecting it for future generations to enjoy. Interested groups are invited to get in touch with us for further information with guidance available throughout the application process."

For more information about the 2020 Funding Call, to download an information booklet and to submit an expression of interest, please visit [www.fisheriesireland.ie/funding](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/funding). All applicants must apply through an 'Expression of Interest' form to progress to full application. Full applications may be submitted until the closing date for applications on February 25, 2020.



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# Spring promises



## FARMING IN WEST CORK

Tommy Moyles

In his farming diary, West Cork suckler farmer and columnist with the Irish Farmers Journal, Tommy Moyles covers the lay of the land across all agri and farming enterprises – news, views and people in farming across West Cork and further afield.

In association with



Despite damp weather conditions, grazing is moving back on the agenda and fences are getting a once-over; although you could say grazing never stopped this winter.

A group of younger cows was left out to take pressure off the shed and, while the plan was to house them before Christmas, they defied expectations.

The fact they are light and

most of where they were grazing was solid ground helped. With some of them due at the very end of calving there's a fair chance they won't be under a roof at all.

If the weather improves a bit again, I hope to get some of the weanling heifers out. Numbers will be kept small for a start.

It's been a silage-only diet for the majority of them this winter. The smaller ones have been getting a kilo but that's only in the last fortnight since the last of the finishing heifers left.

It's a big change from the time when they used to be on 2kg or 3kg daily.

In the lead-up to going to grass they will all get a small shake and will be trained to an on-off system for a few days. It's a major labour-reducer in the long term.

There was an unexpected start to calving with an earlier-than-predicted arrival. I didn't know anything about it until I heard that humming sound a cow makes when she has had a calf coming from the straw area. I was wondering why the cow in question never came into heat while doing AI.

Scanning revealed she was a good month ahead of any of the others. The cow in question had been babysitting a bull that was recovering from photosensitivity. While he was blind for a part of last winter, he was obviously well on the road to recovery by April.

There is the bones of a

month before any others are due, so the in-calf heifers will be getting a fluke and worm dose and all cows will get a scour vaccine. After that, it's a case of sit and wait for the next arrival.

### Calving

With calving kicking off on farms all over the country, marts are gearing up for a busy spring. Locally, Cork marts have invested over €500,000 at their Bandon venue in new calf facilities that will enable better calf flow and offer more calf comfort.

I was interested to note that in excess of 1.5m calves have gone through Bandon Mart since it commenced the calf business.

Minister for Agriculture Michael Creed recently launched the new calf handling facilities at Bandon Mart. The minister commended the leadership and investment that Cork Marts showed with the facility, saying: "I'd like to acknowledge the vote of confidence this is in the calf sector." He added that welfare "is absolutely front and centre for ensuring the continued export of cattle and calves".

In 2015, there were 145,000 live exports of cattle. In 2019 that figure was 300,000, of which 200,000 were calves.

"Everybody's commitment to the highest welfare standards is critical to the continuation of this industry," the minister said.



Cows outwintered on Tommy Moyles' farm.

He added that when he was on a visit to the Netherlands in late 2019 he met buyers who complimented Irish calves for their quality and health. However he offered a cautionary tale, saying that on the same day they were visiting Dutch calf buyers, there was a vote in the Dutch parliament to ban live imports of cattle.

He also stated welfare is almost always raised at meetings of the council of ministers.

Mart manager Tom McCarthy said: "This is one of the busiest calf marts in the country. In 2019 we put through 31,500 calves in this shed alone. So it's great that Cork Marts have the confidence to invest here. There's massive expansion in the dairy herd and the four west Cork co-ops make up our main catchment area so hopefully we can build on that and provide a good service for West Cork farmers.

"Bandon has a great name and reputation over the years for the quality and number of

calves and hopefully we have a facility there for the next generation as well."

Calf and indeed cattle prices are moving ahead of the same time last year. Calves were trading in the region of €20 to €50/head ahead of 2019 sales while currently prices for older cattle in marts are ahead of factory prices.

### Beef Plan Movement

The Beef Plan Movement, the organisation that instigated the protests witnessed at beef factory gates last summer is in the midst of an internal row at present. The co-chairs, Meath men, Eamon Corley and Hugh Doyle, have stood down the national committee while the national committee voted to remove the co-chairs at an EGM in late January.

The movement grew from a WhatsApp group and thrived on social media. For an organisation, that for a time in 2019 held so much sway, it now looks like their greatest

challenge will be to try and stay together.

### General election

There are promises aplenty flying around in the lead-up to the general election. From a farming perspective, they include talk of rewarding farmers for one environmental management, capping CAP payments and the good old farming election mainstay, the suckler cow, gets a mention too.

My concern with broad environmental payments is, in the next economic downturn, they will be one of the first things to be got rid of or reduced, just as they were in the 2008 crash.

Currently, there are areas of farms, in some parts of the country, especially in the West Cork area, vast swathes of land that are deemed ineligible for payment, yet would have a good nature value.

With the new CAP having a focus on the environment, is it too simplistic a view to have an environmental payment on this?

It might be too obvious, but this is land that would offer an instant solution to easing the biodiversity crisis and would reward farmers who for years have been penalised for it. There could be the bonus of helping to retain communities in areas where dairy is not an option. Perhaps it's something that should be considered.

## Farm Life: Beef and sheep farmer, Conor O'Mahony, Kealkill

### Describe the farm?

My father and I have a mixed farm with both sucklers and sheep. The land type would be marginal, but with considerable investment over the last number of years in drainage and reclamation, the farm's productivity has improved considerably.

### What livestock do you have?

We run a mainly Limousin cross suckler herd with a pedigree Limousin bull and all weanlings are sold through the marts. Our sheep flock is predominantly Suffolk cross and bred to pedigree Belclare or Suffolk ram. Lambs are drafted off grass throughout the summer and sold through the marts or to the factory. The cattle are split with half

calving in autumn and half in spring.

We have some spring born weanling still left to sell; with the poor trade last autumn we decided to winter these cattle. Hopefully our decision will have paid off. We are hoping to sell these soon before the workload with lambing increases. The 50 ewes start lambing from March 10 onwards.

### What's happening on the farm at the moment?

We are currently preparing for lambing. Ewes are on 300g of a 16 per cent protein ration and the inclusion of soya bean meal will be increased as March 10 approaches. A lot of the work associated with lambing is done well



Conor O'Mahony, with Joe Burke from Bord Bia.

in advance with culling the problematic sheep, dagging, vaccinating and giving mineral boluses. Having the correct

BCS at mating and throughout the pregnancy has a great impact on the amount of lambs weaned per ewe.

### Typical of many other farmers in West Cork, you have an off farm job. How busy are you because of that?

I'm currently working in St James national school, Durrus. It's been a very busy year; having recently bought a cottage, my finance Ann and I are in the process of renovating and extending it. We are also planning for our wedding in July so time on the farm is a welcome distraction. Fortunately my father is picking up the slack in the farm, as I deal with building contractors and a very hectic work life balance.

2019 was a difficult year for beef farmers and saw the suckler cow taking hit after hit from both market trends and cheaper imports. Hopefully

2020 will see a more positive outlook for rural dwellers and more buoyant beef trade.

### What can be done to improve that?

The government needs to invest in rural road and broadband infrastructure to allow West Cork's youth to work from the area and to make commutes safer. Also the government should ban zero hour and non-permanent contracts, as this is making it virtually impossible for young people to get mortgages and establish themselves on the property ladder, as opposed to paying extortionate rents on properties they will never be able to afford.

The College of Progressive Education are enrolling now for our **QQI accredited SNA Level 5 & 6 Courses** in Cork in Bandon, Mahon and Wilton.

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## Teagasc launches New EU BovINE network project

A new trans-European beef network, called BovINE, aimed at addressing the sector's sustainability challenges was launched by Teagasc in conjunction with EU research and farming partners at the Teagasc Food Research Centre Ashtown, Dublin in January.

BovINE will link researchers, advisors, farmers and other relevant stakeholders across nine EU member states to stimulate the exchange of knowledge and ideas at an international level under the headings of: socio-economic resilience, animal health and welfare, production efficiency and meat quality and environmental sustainability.

Teagasc successfully tendered and were awarded funding of €2 million by the European Union to develop this project, which will be shared with 17 other EU partners. The BovINE project will engage with beef farmers from nine Member States, covering 75 per cent of the suckler cow population in Europe and 70 per cent of beef output. Focused on responding to farmer-identified needs, the BovINE network will provide beef farmers with access to information about innovations that could improve sustainability

of their farms and the wider industry.

Dr. Áine Macken-Walsh, Senior Researcher in Teagasc says: "At the heart of this project is the belief that there are different sources of knowledge that can be used by farmers to solve their problems. There is the traditional 'expert knowledge' from scientists and researchers, but there is also the very valuable 'practitioner knowledge' that other farmers have developed as a result of grappling with similar problems. This project will bring both types of knowledge together to respond to farmers' needs."

Professor Maeve Henchion, Head of Department of Agrifood Business and Spatial Analysis of Teagasc, and BovINE coordinator explains: "BovINE takes a bottom up approach to identifying farmers' needs. Each year we will ask farmers to identify their most urgent needs and we will respond to these needs in two ways. Firstly, drawing on the international network of our 17 partners which includes farmer associations, breeder associations, agricultural advisory organisations, and applied research institutions, we will look to identify and share examples of solutions used by other farmers across the EU-wide network. Second,

drawing on the same network, we will identify solutions from research results that have not yet been put into widespread practice. Any proposed solutions that have not yet been applied in practice will be subject to scrutiny in a demonstration farm context before being promoted for widespread adoption."

Kevin Kinsella, Director of Livestock with the Irish Farmers Association said: "With continuing pressure on beef farm incomes in Ireland and across Europe, this initiative is very welcome. Irish farmers have always been prepared to adopt new technology and change. This project will provide a structure that will enable us to learn more and improve, and share our experiences with other European beef farmers. We are committed to working with Teagasc and many European farm organisations and research colleagues through BovINE, to help Irish and European beef farmers."

At the core of the project are comprehensive communication activities targeted at beef farmers across Europe. Join the mailing list for project news at [bovine@minervacomms.net](mailto:bovine@minervacomms.net)

## Growing interest in Once A Day (OAD) milking



Interest in the practice of Once A Day (OAD) milking continues to grow. The practice is sometimes considered as an option in situations where labour is in short supply, the farm layout means that cows have long walks to and from the parlour, or where reducing the number of milkings carried out is attractive from a lifestyle perspective.

Speaking at a conference in January, Teagasc dairy advisor and organiser of the conference, Brian Hilliard said: "Interest and enquiries on milking cows once a day for the entire lactation continues to rise each year. There is a slow but steady take up of the system, as more farmers get the courage to make the change, or adopt it for the first time on non-dairy farms."

Farmers considering OAD milking are encouraged to prepare well in advance before adopting the practice, by attending conferences, going to farm meetings on well-established OAD farms, and by contacting their Teagasc advisor.

UK Farmer Keith Davis is one of the keynote speakers at today's conference. He explained why he operates a Once A Day milking system on his farm; "We milk OAD because we quickly realised

that milking cows was the most profitable enterprise for our farm, after we moved to a grazing based system. So by milking OAD, we could milk 1,000 cows using every hectare that is accessible to the dairy buildings, whilst still using our current 32 point rotary milking parlour. To get labour today, it helps to be flexible and to be able to communicate."

Catherine and Liam Millerick said that they wanted to see if they could get 80-90 per cent of their Twice A Day (TAD) income on OAD. Once they researched that they could achieve 80-90 per cent farm profitability, in line with the TAD herds, it was a runner for them. They needed a new challenge after 34 years of milk quotas. Going OAD for the Millerick's was a choice that they made themselves; they did not jump into it because of quota restrictions, or long cow walks etc. The benefits included improved lifestyle for themselves and for their cows, better stock health; it was more labour-friendly and had similar levels of profitability. Breeding the suitable cow for OAD, while it took time, was also important to the success of the business.

Michael O'Donovan and Emer Kennedy have recent-

ly started a new research programme on OAD milking in Teagasc Moorepark. Emer Kennedy presented results from the first full year of the study, which is set to continue for the next number of years. The results showed that high performance can be achieved from OAD – almost 400 kg milk solids per year were produced by the OAD cows in year one of the study. These cows also had improved fertility and body condition score. One of the key messages is that if a farmer is considering OAD milking, they need to have good grassland and herd management skills to minimise reductions in cow production performance.

In a comparison of TAD, robotics and once a day milking, Patrick Gowing, Teagasc dairy expansion advisor, emphasised that when comparing OAD against a robotic milking system, the milking process is less time-consuming when robots are used, (40 minutes versus two hours), but it requires significant investment to achieve this. Therefore OAD is a lower risk option, provided the drop in output is not too excessive, as it requires lower investment levels than a robotic system.

## Dairy waste not a problem but an opportunity according to UCC expert

The three R's to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' waste help society to minimise the amount of waste produced and to protect the earth's natural resources. In a circular economy waste is a resource that helps generate new products, a concept that is very familiar to farmers who spread slurry, a nutrient-rich waste material on the land to facilitate growth of a new product, i.e. grass. Scientists and engineers are now looking at a whole variety of waste streams, and their composition, with a view to extracting valuable chemicals from the waste, and to make food and materials from these waste streams to replace feedstocks derived from fossil fuels. This circular economy approach is not only good for the environment but may also be good for a company's bottom-line, generating new sources of revenue from waste that currently is a cost to the company to treat and dispose.



*Native Lemna minor; a novel high protein feedstock? Pic: Marcel Jansen*

The EPA-funded Newtrients consortium will hold a workshop at the Environmental Research Institute at University College Cork on resource recovery from dairy processing effluent. Such effluent is produced during manufacture of dairy products

and this waste is high in carbohydrates, protein, fat, nitrogen and phosphorus. In Cork, experts from industry and academia, from Ireland and further afield, will present the latest insights in the use of dairy processing waste as source of bioenergy, and as a feedstock for the production of valuable biopolymers. Dr Niall O'Leary (UCC) has extensive research expertise in biopolymer production, and considers dairy processing waste "as a particularly promising feedstock for the sustainable production of biodegradable plastics". Prof Marcel Jansen (UCC) is an expert on the use of aquatic duckweed plants to recover nitrogen and phosphorus from effluent, and he considers "the possibility to produce a high protein plant-based feed from waste water particularly exciting as this will directly improve sustainability of the dairy sector and decrease reliance on imported feed".

## Galway snail farmer wins Irish NEWBIE farm entrant competition

Steven Ryan from Tuam, County Galway has been selected as the winner of the 2019 NEWBIE new farm entrant competition. Steven diversified the farm business in 2014, setting up a snail farm alongside the family's beef and sheep farm. The farm is now producing 4,000kg of snails for the export market annually.

Speaking after the award, Steven Ryan was keen to highlight the potential of snail farming as another income stream on farms providing "a good income from a small piece of ground". There is also flexibility to work around busy periods such as calving, lambing, harvest etc. Steven

feels that snail farming in Ireland has great potential and is heavily involved in plans to develop a processing facility in Ireland giving farmers a home market for their product. "We started out using Google and YouTube for information and through trial and error developed a system that suits the Irish climate."

John Moriarty NEWBIE project advisor with Teagasc said: "Those considering entering agriculture or diversifying their business can learn a huge amount from Steven's story. Steven has identified an enterprise that complemented the existing enterprises while maintaining a quality work-life balance. The

award includes €500 towards training or an international farm visit, costs associated with the making of a farm video, a plaque for display on-farm, and the opportunity to attend a NEWBIE conference with other national winners from across Europe."

The NEWBIE Network is an EU Horizon 2020 funded project with 10 European partners. Newbie offers a unique platform by bringing together new entrants, successors, advisors, researchers, important regional and national actors and relevant stakeholders in national networks, with the aim of enabling new entrants to successfully establish a sustainable farm business in Europe.



## West Cork Accountancy firm leading the way in bringing Cloud Accounting to SMEs

2020 is the perfect time to create efficiencies in your business.

**Caroline Crowley**, Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser with Charles P Crowley Accountants is encouraging all small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and farmers to make a resolution to move to cloud accounting. Cloud Accounting helps small and medium sized businesses to have better control over their cashflow, providing them with real-time information which supports effective decision making.

**S**MEs are a vital part of the Irish economy accounting for 70 per cent of employment and over 90 per cent of the total number of enterprises in Ireland. According to Caroline “many are relying on traditional accounting systems, spreadsheets and in some cases handwritten records, maintaining their fi-

nancial records in this manner could be putting their business at risk, as it is not secure.”

### Advantages

SMEs who move to cloud accounting will spend less time on administration, bookkeeping and chasing outstanding monies from customers as well as having the peace of mind that records are kept accurately and securely. If your laptop crashes, your premises is flooded or you lose a receipt you can rest assured that records are securely maintained. When data is stored on the cloud, it reduces the reliance on manual backups. You can access your information wherever you are via computer, smart phone or tablet making it incredibly convenient for people who aren't office-based.

### How it works

The software connects to your business bank account allowing it to reconcile with your accounts on a real-time basis. You can now raise an invoice on an app on your phone, auto-reconcile the receipt of this money and automatically send out reminder emails to customers requesting them to pay the balance outstanding. It will also provide customers with the option to pay this via credit card, all from the comfort of their couch. Cloud accounting will provide you with a closer relationship with your accountant as they can use this information to prepare your accounts and submit returns to Revenue. There is no waiting until the end of the month or

year to do the accounts to see where you stand.

Using the software to issue quotes and bills will mean you will be alerted when a recipient has viewed the quote or invoice, and they can send a friendly reminder to payees before and after the due date. This type of automation frees business owners from chasing payments. Market analysis of hundreds of thousands of invoices shows that e-invoices tend to be paid 33 per cent sooner than traditional invoices.

2020 is the right time to consider moving your accounting system to the cloud. A digitised environment means business owners get more from their company. That might be opportunities to increase revenue, more family time or simply reduced headaches. The future for small and medium sized business is changing. It is a new year and a new decade and you need to open your mind to technological advances which will transform your business.

Talk to us to learn more. At CPC Accountants we are XERO certified advisers. Beyond balancing the books we want to bring the cloud accounting tool XERO to business owners and promote innovation amongst SMEs. We believe that XERO will provide small and medium companies with access to technology that was once the preserve of larger organisations. We are here to help business owners adapt to this new way of working. We can

provide one-to-one training to business owners along with monthly reviews to support them with this change. To quote Charles Darwin “It is

not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” Make a positive business resolution

and contact us today by email on [caroline@charlespcrowley.com](mailto:caroline@charlespcrowley.com) or call 023-8841899.



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SMEs who move to cloud accounting will spend less time on administration, bookkeeping and chasing outstanding monies from customers as well as having the peace of mind that records are kept accurately and securely.

At CPC Accountants we are XERO certified advisers – we are here to help business owners adapt to this new way of working. We can provide you with one-to-one training, along with monthly reviews to support you with this change.

**Make a positive business resolution and contact us today by email on [caroline@charlespcrowley.com](mailto:caroline@charlespcrowley.com) or call 023-8841899**

## OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Skibbreen Community School players and coaches prior to the Basketball Ireland U16 C Boys Schools Cup Final between St Joseph's Secondary School, Rochfortbridge and Skibbreen Community School at the National Basketball Arena in Tallaght, Dublin.  
Photo by Harry Murphy/Sportsfile



Niamh Kingston, Clonakilty, Cork Graduate Diploma in Chemical Engineering from the University of Limerick Pic Sean Curtin True Media.

## people A flavour of West Cork

# A flavour of Mexico



## A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

This month we are eating our way around southeast Mexico. We flew into Cancun and travelled down the Caribbean coast of Quintana Roo towards Guatemala. It's very beautiful, the water is crystal blue, but it comes with full-on tourism and touts so we decided to head away from the coast and explore the Yucatan and towns of the interior.

The land is lush, green and gently undulates. No mountains here and strangely no rivers, instead there is a network of water that travels underground popping up in cenotes. Cenotes are deep

fresh water pools, sometimes open and sometimes in caves with stalactites and creepers hanging. They are very deep – up to 45 metres – and crystal clear, absolutely stunning. It's possible to jump into them and swim, strangely enough even though they are so deep, they are not cold, and there are plenty of fish, which nibble your toes.

The city centres are old colonial style, sprawling out to poorer areas. We've explored Valladolid, Merida and Campeche. We seek out the markets, which are overflowing with avocados, mangos, chillies and just about every conceivable fruit and vegetable that grows in the south. The sounds, smells and colours are amazing and an interesting place to buy breakfast or brunch. Quesadillas, negritos, empanadas, tacos, gorditas, enchiladas, polcans, panouches, chilaquiles, huaraches... The list is boggling but we are beginning to navigate our way around the menu. The one thing that they all have in common is corn. Each is made from ground corn be it a fresh tortilla, a fried tortilla or made from masa (corn dough) that is wrapped around a filling, then

grilled or deep-fried. Topped or filled with shredded pork, turkey, pork, fish, prawns or refined beans, cheese, pink pickled onions, avocado, radishes, shredded cabbage and served with a variety of salsas, this food is bright and diverse. Not a spud in sight! The salsa's are nearly as varied as the tortilla dishes. The pico de gallo – diced tomato, chilli, onion, coriander and lime juice is fresh and zingy but the habanero salsa – which is the most popular, can blow your head off!

For the rest of the day there are taquerias on the street that churn out tacos and various cantinas that serve bigger meals. In the interior, the food is pretty meaty and on the coast the menu is seafood.

We've been poking our noses into kitchens, picking people's brains for recipes and were lucky enough to spend an evening cooking with a Mayan lady that we were introduced to. She made us real Mexican/Mayan home cooking. One recipe was this ceviche – without fish – as she explained ceviche is a process not a fish dish. It was fresh and delicious, perfect scooped up with totopos (tortilla chips). It could also be piled on top of a burger, fish or grilled meats



or just enjoyed as a salad.

And better still the ingredients are available in Ireland. It's important that the avocados are ripe, which could take some forward-thinking. If they are a bit hard, put them in the fruit bowl with a 'do not eat me' sign for a few days and they will ripen.

### Avocado Ceviche

#### Ingredients:

1 cucumber  
1 small-medium onion  
3 ripe avocados  
a handful of fresh chopped

coriander  
pinch of crushed oregano  
pinch of black pepper  
1 tbs olive oil  
juice of 3-4 limes – depends how juicy they are  
a good pinch of salt

#### Method

Cut the cucumber in half, then scoop out the seeds then cut it into strips lengthwise and dice. Peel and chop the onion finely

Cut the avocado in half, removing the stone then slicing in strips (without going

through the skin) then into a dice, cutting the other way. Scoop the avocado from the skin with a spoon.

Add all of the above ingredients together then mix gently. Taste and add more salt or lime juice if needed.

Sunny greetings from Celestun, I'll be back soon for the cooking classes!

Karen



LETTERCOLLUM  
kitchen project

### Cooking Classes Spring 2020

#### Saturday 21st March MEXICAN

We are taking a wander around Mexico and Cuba this winter so I will have some exciting new recipes to share, think tacos, quesadillas, salsas, ceviche, frijoles dormidos (sleeping beans). The menu is not made yet but we'll find one!

#### Saturday 28th March LEBANESE

Enjoy the wonderful fresh Mezze, Pilafs and Salads of this beautiful country and learn how simple they are to put together.

#### Sat 4th April

#### RECIPES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Plant based diets are big news these days. A lot of the world always eats in this way, there's a surprising amount of healthy and fun eating out there. Today's class will be about recipes to inspire you.

#### Saturday 18th April THAI

Fresh and zippy recipes for noodle and rice dishes, curries, stir fried vegetables, fresh salads and seafood.

#### Saturday 25th April INDIAN VEGETARIAN

Lots of easy Indian recipes for every day dinners or to make a feast. The spices are aromatic, not the blow your head off chilli type that many people fear.

#### Saturday 9th May SALADS & SUMMER RECIPES

Lots of fresh ideas and recipes, using seasonal ingredients to make delicious and nutritious salads, salad dressings and summer meals.

The classes are held at Lettercollum in Timoleague. They begin at 10am and finish around 3pm, The cost is €95 and includes all recipes, tastings and a large lunch

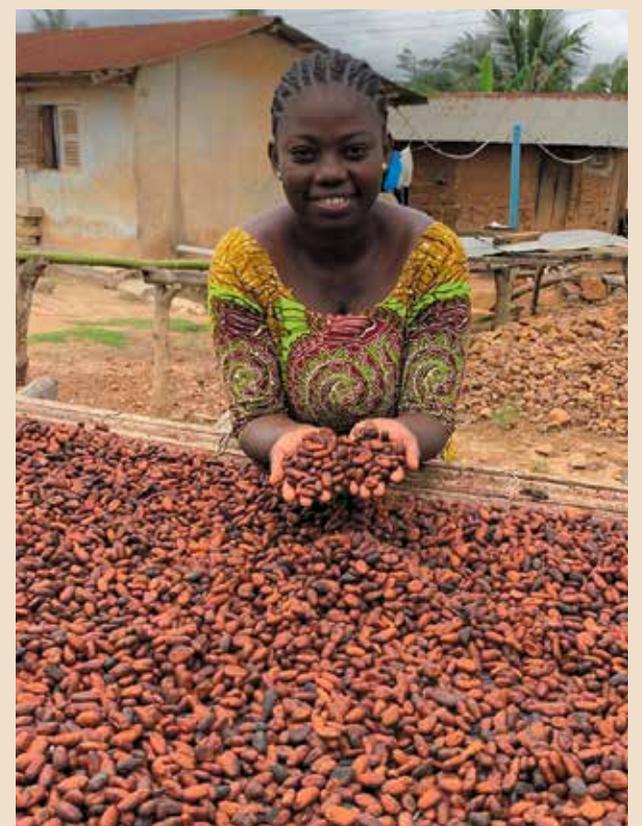
22 CONNOLLY STREET, CLONAKILTY, WEST CORK  
Tel: 023 8836938 info@lettercollum.ie www.lettercollum.ie

## A chocolate-y Fairtrade fortnight in Clonakilty

The Clonakilty Fairtrade group is looking forward to Fairtrade fortnight, which will run this year from February 24 to March 8. 'IChooseFairtrade – SheDeservesBetter!' is the worldwide mantra for this Fairtrade fortnight, with a strong focus on cocoa, and especially on the particular role that women farmers play in the cocoa industry. Deborah Osei-Mensah is one such cocoa farmer, and she will visit Clonakilty, from Ghana, for a special event 'Chocolate: from tree to bar'.

The event will take place in O'Donovan's Hotel, on Friday, February 28 at 7.30pm and Deborah will be pairing up with local chocolate maker Allison Roberts to host an evening in celebration of Fairtrade cocoa. Cocoa is the main ingredient in chocolate, and during the evening we will taste and trace the chocolate journey, from cocoa trees in West Africa all the way to the Clonakilty studio of Exploding Tree Chocolate. This talk will incorporate a chocolate tasting and a full explanation of how chocolate is made. The evening will be of interest to anyone who likes the odd square of chocolate (which is possibly most of the population of Clonakilty!) and may be of additional interest to those wanting to learn more about ethical trade, or to local farmers; to discover the challenges facing cocoa farming in Ghana.

Tickets are €8 and can be booked online at [www.explodingtree.com/events/](http://www.explodingtree.com/events/) or by ringing Allison at 085 757 4338. Schools are also encouraged to get in touch, as Deborah and Allison are available for visits. Check out Fairtrade fortnight at [www.fairtrade.ie](http://www.fairtrade.ie), and for local events keep an eye on local press and on our Clonakilty Fairtrade Facebook page. Don't forget: choose Fairtrade!



Cocoa farmer Deborah Osei-Mensah will visit Clonakilty

# Will 2020 be the year for 'ClonAbility'?

## WALKING IN MY SHOES

Elizabeth Walsh

Elizabeth Walsh is a founding member of Clonakilty Access Group and current Chair. She fosters the idea that there is a whole range of business opportunities being lost as a result of lack of accessibility; people with disabilities, their friends and family, will give patronage where they can access. Out of this 'ClonAbility' was born, an initiative between Clonakilty Access Group and Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce, whereby, simple steps are laid out to enhance business opportunity through providing access to customers/visitors, encouraging tourism.

Each and every day our lives impact on each person's life whose path we cross, metaphorically and physically, positively or negatively!

Have you wondered, why do Access Groups exist? Take Clonakilty for example, what happened there?

Well circa 1995, there was a new footpath being laid outside Clonakilty Post Office, however when this author enquired as to where the ramps were being placed, it transpired that there were none on the plans. Thus, began a journey, to Clonakilty Council Offices and an introduction to the engineer. Every Councillor in Clonakilty was approached regarding that issue. One responded, Cionnaith Ó Súil-leabháin, who secured funding

from both Councils to fund the ramps, which had been omitted from the planning. Furthermore, a public meeting was called and the first Clonakilty Access Group was formed. This was born of necessity not because its members were short of something to do. Over the years we have had many members who have given time as committee members, and still have a dedicated and untiring committee. However, one individual, must be mentioned, who was a founding member, who worked tirelessly as Chair with us, whose contribution to access in Clonakilty was immense. Joan Sexton (RIP) was our close friend and colleague and still inspires us in all that we do.

You might be forgiven for imagining that this story began in 1995, but this is 2020; surely architects and engineers, planners and contractors could not make such errors/omissions, especially with all the legislation and guidance on hand to refer to and which they should adhere to.

To understand in any comprehensive, meaningful way how important the built physical urban landscape is to an individual with physical/visual disabilities, try to wear their shoes for a moment.

In 2016, when there was a regeneration of Clonakilty, there were two independent access audits in May prior to the end of the works. Both remain outstanding, some of the items outstanding were termed hazardous.

Is it ethically or morally

right that there is a requirement for Access Groups, to ensure that people with disabilities can access their environment, their towns, cities and villages?

Everyone seems to understand the right to education or housing or health; why do these same people not understand that everyone has a right to access the environment? This is 2020; look around you in your town; what needs to be altered?

Candidates are looking for your vote now. Please ask these individuals: what have you done for people with disabilities in your town? If you are already a Councillor in West Cork: What have you done to address the outstanding access audits in Clonakilty?

The amusing part of the Access Group saga is that in the beginning we had this vision, that human empathy, conscience and moral duty would take over and that our job would be finished. Through ongoing co-operation and liaison with Clonakilty County Council, Cork County Council, the various statutory bodies and many others over the years, many issues were resolved, to such an extent that we became almost redundant for a while. Unfortunately, more issues have been created, some not addressed and essentially the pace of living and selfishness also contribute to ongoing issues (think abuse of parking spaces for people with disabilities and street furniture littering the street).

2020 can be a year of

change, it is up to every individual what they choose to contribute to another's life, make it better or worse, easier or more difficult. Make Clonakilty the most accessible

friendly town, make it known for its altruism and empathy, respect and generosity of spirit, towards EVERYONE!

Will 2020 be the year Clonakilty is known for 'ClonAbil-

ity' or its' ongoing struggle for 'accessibility'?

Can Clonakilty set the gold standard for West Cork?



## FOLEY

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**EMPATHY, DIGNITY, RESPECT**

## OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Pictured at the official opening and blessing of Foley's Funeral Home in Clonakilty were the Foley family (l-r) Denise, Mary (seated), John and John Michael, Clonakilty Mayor Michael O'Neill and John Mulcahy with John Michael and Denise's children Maggie, Catherine, Ellen and Johnny in front.



Cork County Mayor Cllr Christopher O'Sullivan was at O'Donovans Bar in Fishers Cross Clonakilty to help with the presenting of four cheques to Cork organisations, Marymount Hospice, Cancer Connect, Ardfield Rathbarry Defibrillator Group and Clonakilty Community Care Society. The monies were raised at various events including a shave off, a sports event and New Years Day music event. Photo by Dermot Sullivan

## people Environment : Making a difference

Welcome to the **West Cork People Environment** section where we highlight the positive stories that are happening in West Cork in relation to climate change, carbon emission reduction, reduction in plastic use and much more. Though the headlines are constantly warning us of the dangers of inaction, we are starting to see throughout West Cork the beginnings of a new



awareness about how we all need to change our ways and practices. We believe that the best way to encourage change is to write about the people who are making changes. If your business or company has started to do things in a better, environmentally-friendly way, we would love to hear about it!

# Cork County Council has a key role to play in leading by example on the sustainability agenda



## ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Fiona Hayes

Many of us will have looked at the candidates in the general election, as we did in the 2019 local elections and asked ourselves, “Who will take seriously the declared climate and biodiversity emergency?”

An equally good question would be, “When elected on a platform of climate and environmental policy, does your elected representative get the opportunity to stand up for the environment, climate change and biodiversity when making decisions?”

I was in the Council Chamber as an observer recently, when a proposed amendment (or variation) to the Cork County Development Plan, to provide strategic planning policy support for a Retail Outlet Centre in the N25 Corridor was discussed.

It seems many of the councillors present were in favour of this amendment, though some, most notably from the Green Party, the Social Democrats and Independent were clearly against it. They raised environmental and social sustainability concerns and, along with Fianna Fáil, raised concerns regarding the effect that such a retail park would have on the retail life of town centres and villages.

The recently appointed Office of The Planning Regulator (OPR) had written to Cork County Council, recommending that the proposed amendment should not be passed by council, as it was not consistent with the Retail Planning Guidelines. They

said it was premature to the preparation and finalisation of wider retail, spatial planning and transportation policies that are relevant to the implementation of plan-led development in the interests of sustainable development.

The full letter from the OPR can be found at [www.opr.ie](http://www.opr.ie). It was interesting to watch the governance and the way this item eventually played out in the Chamber. There were many comments from councillors in favour of passing the amendment alongside those with concerns against it.

Fianna Fáil, supported by some of the other councillors requested a deferral of the decision in order for there to be time for councillors to be supplied with more information, such as economic data relating to towns and villages, carbon footprint etc.

The Chief Executive was at pains to point out that “this was not zoning for a specific site for a particular planning” and there were some queries then as to why there was urgency for the decision to be made outside the review of the County Development Plan. However the Chief Executive was anxious that the vote, for or against the proposed adaptation should take place at that meeting. He said that under planning law “the consideration of the variation and the Chief Executive’s Report on that variation, must be completed within six weeks” although “No time limit is set to the resolution”.

His concern was that should the councillors ‘not’ make a decision within the six weeks (i.e. before 31st January 2020) there would be ‘a risk’ that if a judicial review of the variation should arise, the court could take the view that ‘the whole aim of the six week period is to set a time limit to the variation procedure’.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 from which the CEO was quoting the six-week time limit states that ‘A person shall not question the validity of a variation in a development

plan by reason only that the procedures as set out were not completed within the time required.’

Nevertheless in response to a further request from Fianna Fáil, for a deferral in order for there to be more time to receive more information, the Chief Executive stated that ‘he believed’ his ‘study was adequate’ with ‘nothing (he) believe(d) needing to be added’ and that there was ‘no basis for him to move this forwards’ and thus he ‘would not be in a position to put it back on the agenda’ as it ‘brings Council potentially into a serious risk situation’.

Although he more than once noted that this was ‘not zoning a specific site for a particular planning’ despite the press reports on it, he did not elaborate on ‘WHO’ could successfully apply to the High Court for leave to bring Judicial Review proceedings.

In order to make such an application one has to have a material interest in the site. However the question was left unanswered of ‘who’ then, if there is no particular site, nor planning application or entity with a material interest, would go through the procedure of applying for leave to bring Judicial Review proceedings against the council?

After a short recess for Fianna Fáil to decide how they as a party would respond given they were NOT going to be provided with further information, the chamber took a vote and the motion was passed by 42 votes in favour, four against and one abstention.

From the perspective of those with environmental concerns, including climate mitigation and adaptation, it makes no sense at all to create large out-of-town retail parks. They are reliant on car travel, have been shown by many studies to reduce the profitability of retail in the towns to the point where many town centres do not survive and may create considerable vehicle congestion.

Ireland already has the third

highest emissions of greenhouse gases per capita in the EU with 20 per cent of climate change emissions being down to transport and the majority of that produced by car use.

In May 2019, commenting in the Irish Examiner at the launch of the Local Authority Climate Adaptation Strategy Development, the then County Mayor of Cork, Cllr Patrick Gerard Murphy stated,

“Government strategy has long recognised the crucial role played by local government in translating national sustainable development policies into tangible practical local actions. The range of services delivered by Cork County Council means we are uniquely placed to play a lead role in sustainable development, both in terms of our own activities and also in supporting local communities and businesses. The impact of climate change means sustainable development can no longer be an aspiration; it is now an undeniable necessity. We owe it to the young people of Cork to ensure that our decisions don’t compromise their future!”

The Chief Executive stated that Cork County Council “has a key role to play in leading by example on the sustainability agenda.”

Indeed, Cork County Council has a standing Local Agenda 21 Forum. Agenda 21, adopted by 178 national governments at the 1992 Rio Conference, recognised that many environmental problems can be traced back to local communities and that local governments have an important role to play in implementing environmental programs to develop integrated local plans for environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being. This requires the integration of planning and action across economic, social and environmental spheres.

Setting local policy that is in conflict with sustainable development and which reflects ONLY a narrow economic policy, must count as a failure

to lead by example

Surely it is imperative to the democratic process that elected public representatives are not pressured to make decisions that affect the economic and environmental future without the information that they believe they should have.

It is up to members of the public to not only vote for representatives who will take seriously the declared climate and biodiversity emergency, but also to hold those representatives to account once elected;

and to hold to account the governance of our public bodies to ensure that it is possible to look to the future and create the change we so desperately need.

The Public is invited to attend and observe Full Council Meetings from the Public Viewing Gallery. The meetings are held fortnightly on Mondays starting at 11am, the next one being on February 10, 2020.

The agenda is published at [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie).

## Trees – free to a good home

Trees Please, a new advocacy group based in Cork, is looking for places to plant trees and for people to get involved. The group is willing to provide trees for gardens, parks, verges and other open spaces.

Taking a direct action approach, Trees Please has already facilitated a unique seed-foraging walk with Macroom native forestry expert Ted Cooke, a film night showing Diana Beresford-Kroeger’s ‘The Call of the Forest’, a workshop for building seed boxes as well as a successful and fun-filled tree-themed table quiz.

Another unmissable woodland walk will take place with Future Forests founder Mike Collard at Maugha in West Cork. Meeting at Future Forests on February 15 at 11am, participants are asked to bring a packed lunch. After 47 years of working with trees, Mike wants to impart his vast knowledge of forest ecology. The day will include information about foraging, a visit to ancient oak forest remnants, food and music children are welcome.

There are further plans to host a music night featuring award-winning songwriter Laura McCarthy and friends, more foraging workshops and an appearance at the annual Ballydehob Tree Fest on March 7-8.

Trees Please was founded to offer people a practical means of doing something about climate change while boosting ailing biodiversity. The group hopes that establishing native woodlands will enhance community spirit while expanding habitats for wildlife.

Members of the public have embraced the project with great enthusiasm. Many people yearn to counteract the daily drumbeat of bad news stories by doing something themselves.

The ethos is simple; grow native trees from local seed, mind the saplings for a few seasons until they are hardy enough to plant out, meanwhile secure suitable locations to establish woodlands. Planting seed from healthy native trees is an ecologically sound method, ensuring that locally evolved gene pools survive.

New participants are welcome, as are offers relating to locations and help with tree planting.

Contact Trees Please through facebook at [www.facebook.com/planttreescork/](http://www.facebook.com/planttreescork/) or by email on [treescork@gmail.com](mailto:treescork@gmail.com). Tom Campbell on 087 6509741/ 087 6102142. Tom Jordan on 085 7200482. [www.thelivingartists.com](http://www.thelivingartists.com). [www.TomCampbellArt.com](http://www.TomCampbellArt.com).

people Environment : Making a difference



Humpback whale at the Stags, West Cork  
Pic: P. Whooley, IWDG

## Whale Tales Cork: Encounters with humpback whales in West Cork

Are you interested in large whales, or curious about their conservation and research into these magnificent mammals that are returning each year to Cork's inshore waters?

If so, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group is delighted to announce Whale Tales Cork on Saturday, March 28, between 10am and 4pm, at the Celtic Ross Hotel (Warren Suite), Rosscarbery, with an optional land-based Whalewatch at

nearby Cloghna Head, 4-5pm (weather permitting).

This unique one-day event will bring together a diverse mix of citizen scientists, researchers, operators and marine wildlife enthusiasts, all passionate about whales, to share their stories and experiences. It will be an opportunity for the IWDG to present its findings with members of the public who have supported the Irish Cetacean Recording Schemes over the past 25 years and to encourage participation

in these biological recording schemes. It will also be an opportunity to look ahead to the next 20 years, to explore the challenges facing our visiting giants and possible management implications.

Bookings: [www.iwdg.ie](http://www.iwdg.ie) through Eventbrite  
Cost: IWDG members €25, Non members €50 (includes one year membership)  
Enquiries to email: [sightings@iwdg.ie](mailto:sightings@iwdg.ie), Ph. 353 (0) 86 3850568.

## The healing powers of Forest Bathing

Naturally our ancestors and indigenous cultures have been forest bathing since the beginning. But in today's society people are so busy and under a lot of pressure and stress; some simply have forgotten and lost touch with the healing power of nature," says Lisa Curran – Forest Therapist.

Forest Bathing or Shinrin Yoku as it's known in Japan, where it originated, is a wellness practise that immerses us in the forest atmosphere. This practise has proven to enhance wellbeing, relieve stress, boost creativity, encourage relaxation and deepen our relationship with nature and each other. It is a gentle practise, slowing down to the pace of the forest helping to cultivate a more mindful state of being Scientifically proven to decrease anxiety, stress levels and lower blood pressure, it also can also boost our immune system and

increase our creative, mental and physical energy.

The practise begins with a guided nature meditation to awaken the senses through a series of experiences with the natural world: Listening to the forest soundscape, noticing textures, smells, sights and breathing in the forest air, to help ground us in the here and now. This is followed by a series of invitations, guided and unguided, allowing space for your own journey. The walk finishes with a lovely tea ceremony using local foraged plants from the forest.

"I can go to the forest for a walk anytime, why do I need a guide?" is the main question people ask," says Lisa. "Of course you can, but for a lot of people while they are out in the woods their mind is still racing and they are thinking about all the things they have to do afterwards or tomorrow's plans; what's for dinner, what the kids



Lisa Curran

need etc. Some find it hard to quiet the mind, be still and be truly present in the moment. This is why a guide is helpful." The forest therapist works in partnership with the forest to create the best conditions for growth and healing, making every walk unique. The forest is the real therapist and the guide simply opens the doors.

Lisa holds monthly Forest Bathing walks in Glengarriff Nature Reserve and is the resident Forest Therapist for the luxurious Glengarriff

Lodge, where she also hosts Forest Bathing and Forest Therapy Retreats. She is also available for private groups. Lisa is a fully accredited Forest Bathing practitioner and Forest Therapist after completing her six-month training with the Forest Therapy Institute.

"When we are still in nature, something magical happens. The beauty of this practise is in its simplicity and suitability for everyone. It helps people to remember their own personal connection with nature, so they can empower themselves and increase their own health and wellbeing whenever they need to," says Lisa Curran.

"I am looking forward to sharing this wonderful practise in West Cork and beyond."

Lisa's next walk is on March 1. For bookings and more information on Forest Bathing, Forest Therapy and Retreats check out [GlengarriffForesttherapy.ie](http://GlengarriffForesttherapy.ie).

Providing Forest Bathing Walks and Forest Therapy Retreats amongst the magnificent ancient oak forest in Glengarriff Nature Reserve, West Cork.

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## Cork organisations join new national climate action campaign

Cork Climate Action, Cork City and Fuinniv Independent Consulting, Rosscarbery and The Bike Circus, Clonakilty are among the Cork based organisations joining One Future, a new campaign group calling for faster and fairer climate action.

Supporters of the campaign include Concern Worldwide, Christian Aid, The Union of Students in Ireland and Oxfam. The campaign is highlighting climate as a central priority for voters in Cork in the upcoming election, and enables voters to challenge election candidates on the doorstep about their climate action plans.

The current Government plan is to reduce climate pollution by just two per cent a year, even though the United Nations says the global average reduction in emissions must be 7.6 per cent, each year, from

now until 2030 to avoid climate catastrophe.

One Future will be providing colourful 'Ask Cards' and canvass equipment to people in Cork which can handed to candidates with key policy asks, and window stickers to tell canvassers they support faster and fairer climate action, all of which are available to order for free from [www.onefuture.ie](http://www.onefuture.ie).

The campaign will also be supporting people who want to go door-to-door to distribute campaign materials and encourage their neighbours to raise climate issues with candidates who call to their home.

### Policy 'Asks'

The campaign has nine key policy 'asks' of soon-to-be elected TDs and Senators, which focus on accelerating a transition to a sustainable society in a way that ensures

no-one is left behind. The key policy asks for the incoming Oireachtas include: Reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions by at least eight per cent every year; Support the rural economy as farms reduce emissions and become more sustainable; Ban new fossil fuel projects; End peat and coal burning for electricity and ensure fair treatment of workers; Deliver an ambitious State-backed home insulation programme; Advocate internationally for faster and fairer climate action and justice; Restore and protect nature and wildlife; Ensure affordable and accessible public transport for all and; Enable and support community-owned renewable energy projects.

Speaking about the new campaign, Oisín Coghlan, a spokesperson for One Future said: "One Future is a people's

campaign to turn the tables on election candidates. We want to empower people in Cork, and across Ireland, to challenge politicians to commit to faster and fairer climate action.

"Recent studies show that 89 per cent Irish adults say we need to take action now on environment, while 60 per cent of adults say prioritising climate action is very important. With One Future, we want to highlight how great a priority climate action is for the electorate, to election candidates.

"Every party is paying lip service to climate action in this election. One Future will help people test whether politicians are promising to do enough and whether they are promising to make sure what they do is fair.

"Climate action is not a trade off with better public services. Climate action is about better public services. It is not

a trade off with job creation and economic opportunity; it is about job creation and economic opportunity.

The campaign is continu-

ously growing and is calling on organisations and individuals from across Cork, to get in touch via [www.onefuture.ie](http://www.onefuture.ie).

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## people Environment : Making a difference

# Catch and store energy



### PERMANENT CULTURE

Allison Roberts

Continuing on into our exploration of Permaculture and what it might offer to the 'Cool Clon' conversation, last month we had a great meet up and brainstorm with Permaculture expert Istvan Markuly, who will continue to guide this journey over the next 11 months. Istvan highlighted the importance of the system's method of starting at the 'macro' level and working down to the

details, or micro level. Often when designing we work in the opposite manner, focusing on the detail more than the overall purpose – focusing on the new kitchen cabinets rather than the purpose of the kitchen, if that makes sense. So, the starting point for all Permaculture projects is to define the purpose, or the function, the vision for the space in question. I have been asking people about their vision for Clonakilty, and the one answer that keeps coming is the need to celebrate the uniqueness of the town, all the individual small businesses, the landscape and festivals while growing in a sustainable way that encourages community, keeping the main street a friendly place where people can meet and congregate. This vision, one of sustainable growth, people-friendly towns and the celebration of all that is unique will be what we continue to use as the baseline during this project.

On to observations: I have spent the last month gazing

differently around our town, observing. Following from last month's article 'Observe and Interact' I have been surprised to find myself seeing things for the first time while asking others what they are seeing. I have seen how people sit and eat lunches in Emmet Square and mobility-limited members of our community taking rest on the street furniture. I saw corners of the town sitting unused that I had not contemplated before, like the bridge at the back of the Courtyard and some of the parish halls and buildings sitting empty in the evenings. I have seen younger members of our community looking lost for places to go, often congregating in the one covered space we have, the picnic tables in Spiller's Lane and in the few trees and bushes around the periphery of town. I observed traffic in a new way, foot traffic, with people crossing everywhere, especially across the junction around Asna square where the markings are unclear, and as a cyclist,

the lack of contra-flow lanes to help us navigate the town. Other observations that have been submitted for discussion come from Cycle-Sense in Skibbereen – we all can observe the waste we are generating today. Waste being the things we don't want anymore but also waste of resources. We can all observe the pollution and change in our climate. Based on these observations and as a member of the Circular Economy Academy, Cycle Sense is looking to initiate upcycling and waste reduction projects in Skibbereen and West Cork, as well as on projects to increase the uptake of cycling as a form of transportation, including a Cycling Bus and last mile delivery by bike. Which leads us to this month's Permaculture Principal, Catch and Store Energy.

Catch and store energy, the second Permaculture principal, directs us to work with nature and with what we have, minimising the need to seek resources from outside the

system, instead making excellent use of those we do have. Easily applicable and essential to apply to south facing slopes for solar, rainwater storage and such I would like to delve into applying this second principal to people and townscapes. Clonakilty (and West Cork!) is full of human resources, and in order to catch and store that resource/energy what should we do? I love that the signs in Clonakilty are mostly crafted by our own local sign-maker – we have so many talented people locally. Developing on from our vision, we have this amazing resource of individuals, often volunteers who run festivals, charity events and community groups. How can we best 'catch and store' this energy? To encourage and promote? What do you think? We have the Clonakilty Voucher – a great initiative to keep money circulating locally, but again how can we promote this? Another big part of this principal is to develop systems to catch and store resources when they

are abundant. Did you know Clonakilty has a community apple press? What other 'clubs' could we form to make use of what we have already? Perhaps ways of using waste when it is abundant or rainfall, or enthusiasm during festivals? I would love to hear your ideas! We also catch and store energy simply by planting trees, a movement that is underway in Clonakilty already, keep an eye out for tree planting events. If you want to come and delve deeper into this principal and join us in finding Permaculture solutions for Clonakilty we will be meeting at the Bike Circus Wednesday, February 12 at 5pm. Istvan will be there to guide us – please RSVP by text 085 7574338. Over the next month I will be mulling over ways to 'Catch and Store Energy' and I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

To read previous articles or contribute to the conversation visit [www.explodingtree.com/permaculture](http://www.explodingtree.com/permaculture)

## Tree planting volunteers needed

The Clonakilty Tree Planting Project is looking for volunteers willing to help plant trees or get involved in other ways, as well as for people with the knowledge and expertise to do site assessments in consultation with the residents. Especially from now until the end of March! Please phone Diarmaid Cregan 087 2929495 or send him an email at [mr\\_compass@hotmail.com](mailto:mr_compass@hotmail.com) if you would like to put the 'Coillte' back in Cloch na Coillte!

## EPA invites second-level students to consider the environmental impact of everyday items and consumption decisions

The Story of Your Stuff competition combines creativity and science, giving students the chance to win €500 for themselves and €500 for their school, alongside a new Climate Topic Prize.

The young people who influence the trends of today will be the decision-makers of tomorrow and are encouraged to consider how their everyday decisions can have a positive impact on the environment – and the world. That's according to Dr Jonathan Derham, EPA Programme Manager, launching The Story of Your Stuff, an EPA competition aimed at secondary school students, which seeks to empower young people to make environmentally conscious decisions about their 'stuff' and everyday activities.

Now in its fourth year, the competition brings together curiosity, creativity and science, and aims to get young people thinking about sustainability, climate action and environmental protection, and to spread the

word among their friends and family. Entrants are tasked with highlighting the environmental impact of an everyday item or activity by creatively telling its story through a visual medium.

Entrants to the competition will be in with a chance to win €500 for themselves and €500 for their school, while a new 'Climate Topic Prize' will be awarded to the entry that best addresses key climate considerations, such as carbon footprint, greenhouse gas emissions or climate action.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Derham said: "Many young people are deeply concerned about the climate and environmental emergency now facing us worldwide, something that has been well flagged by evidence from scientists, including the EPA. Urgent transformational change is now required to meet these challenges, based on what the evidence is telling us. The EPA is calling on second-level students to enter The Story of Your Stuff competition and to use their artistic talents

to create stories to inspire others to make low carbon and environmentally conscious consumption choices."

Last year's winners were Shurooq Azam, Aldiana Hoxha, Kar Gong Leong and Tomi Ayibiowu from Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School, Dublin 15, who made a video on the story of a toothbrush.

Colette Ryan of the EPA said: "The Story of Your Stuff competition gets people thinking, talking and making changes and identifying ways in which they can become responsible consumers. The competition is a real highlight in the EPA calendar and a testament to the students who take the time to explore the story of their stuff and to the teachers who guide them. We look forward to seeing the projects from this year's entrants."

Competition guidelines and tips are available at [www.thestoryofyourstuff.ie](http://www.thestoryofyourstuff.ie). The deadline for entries is Monday, March 9, 2020.

## Skibbereen gaelscoil students showcase project at the primary science fair



The primary science fair was recently held in Dublin and Gaelscoil Dr. Uí Shúilleabháin, Skibbereen was one of the schools showcasing their project. The science fair provides students with an opportunity to research and develop projects based on science, maths and engineering concepts. This linked in with the school's ethos on project lead work and their green flag status.

The children, from fourth to sixth class choose their topical project 'Plastic in our local environment'.

The project, which was co-ordinated by teacher Joanne Uí Threasaigh, involved a number of strands. Part of the learning was science-based and involved collecting soil samples and analysing them for plastic under a microscope. The children also conducted experiments in the classroom, they analysed how quickly compostable and biodegradable bags decompose. Other aspects of the project involved cleaning up local beaches; they also linked in with the local tidy towns committee on a clean-up in town. The children

made suggestions on how the local council could provide separate waste bins for waste and recycling in town.

The children were full of great tales of what they saw and tested on their trip. They enjoyed seeing so many other projects and explaining and hosting their own stand. The teachers acknowledged how patient, kind and polite the children were on this outing and how rewarding they made their roles as teachers on the day. It was a great learning experience in many ways.

# FUSION

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## Special Feature SPRING HOMES

# Making homes beautiful

It's said that every home should tell the story of or offer an insight into who lives there and Trevor Perrott of Perrott's Home Living Interiors in Clonakilty loves nothing better than to help homeowners pen their own narratives, styling and outfitting beautiful homes all over West Cork.

For Trevor, each room is a different chapter and how the story and design unfolds is all very much in the details. Where a lamp is placed; the way a picture is hung; different textures, colours, shapes added for interest and balance; curtains or blinds; choosing the right size furniture to suit the dimensions of a room; lighting; focal point; functionality; space – there are so many elements to consider when designing a room in your home.

"It's about reading a room and your client," explains Trevor. "A design should be beautiful but also comfortable and functional to fit in with your client's needs. "Very often when I'm out measuring a home for blinds or curtains,

the homeowner will ask my advice on something from an interior designer's perspective. I'm happy to offer that advice and make some tweaks to a room for them and more often than not they're so happy with the effect that they invite me back to design an entire room or rooms in their home."

As well as Trevor's professional and personable interior design service, it's a real advantage that the full package is offered at Perrott's Home Living Interiors in Clonakilty. From carpets, curtains, blinds, bedding, lighting and accessories to sofas, beds, mattresses and dining and occasional furniture – Perrott's has a beautiful range of home interiors to style your house from; and if you don't have the interest or the time, you can get assistance in planning your space.

"So many people don't want to have to go from shop to shop," explains Trevor "which is why we offer the complete package. It takes a lot of pressure off the customer. More and more, we're leaving a room with new flooring, furniture and curtains. Customers want a room finished, and of course that's a lot more job satisfaction for me as an interior designer – seeing a space through from concept to completion."

From February onwards, if



last year is anything to go by, Trevor expects a lot of enquiries from families looking to spruce up their homes before a communion, wedding or other special event. "We're also seeing a lot more demand from young couples who have been building and decorating their homes over time but are now in a position to finish their houses," says Trevor.

So what's on trend for 2020. Velvet apparently is going to be big so why not throw your cautious nature to the wind and go for a statement velvet sofa, designing your room around it (at last check Perrott's Home Living had one in the sale).

Grey is still very dominant but blue is edging in strongly this year. "I don't think grey is going anywhere fast but it is looking like blue is becoming the new grey," says Trevor. Last year's favourite, pink, is however still very popular; a soft dusky pink can really add warmth to a room for a relaxed and comfortable feel.

"Although colours like mustard and blues are still very popular in accessories, there is definitely a trend towards adding lots of texture rather than bold colour in a room for interest," says Trevor. There is also a definite move away from a very cold minimalist

style. It's still about simplicity but comfort is key with warm neutral colours and layers of cosy textiles.

"People are tending to go for fabric over leather when it comes to sofas and suites," says Trevor. "With so many houses sporting hard flooring like wood, concrete or tiles, fabric adds warmth and texture to a room."

"Although colours like mustard and blues are still very popular in accessories, there is definitely a trend towards adding lots of texture rather than bold colour in a room for interest,"

In this more sustainable and green age, customers are also looking for quality pieces that will stand the test of time. "All of our furniture is very high quality and built to last," says Trevor. The same applies to

our carpet and curtain ranges, which are guaranteed to withstand wear and tear from everyday life.

If you're a lover of the Scandi-style and, if you're brave enough, why not try combining some colour with texture and going for a darker, moodier take on this classic style, still using all the textures and pared back light wooden furniture, but perhaps giving it a more gothic feel by introducing a deep blue to the mix.

As well as custom-made curtains, Perrott's Home Living has a very affordable and quality range of ready-made curtains in stock. "We have a diverse range of fabrics for curtains, upholstery and accessories," says Trevor. "And whatever your budget and taste, we can always be relied upon to help you choose the best option to complement the overall aesthetic of the room.

Although curtains will add character and a luxurious finish to any room, if you prefer a more clean and contemporary look, Perrott's has a huge range of blinds to choose from; roller, blackout, wooden, vertical or velux and in every colour and pattern you could possibly imagine.

All of the curtains, blinds and carpets are professionally measured and fitted for a perfect finish.

Celebrating three years of successful business, Trevor acknowledges how grateful he is for local support from individuals and business owners. Fernhill House Hotel, Ballylickey House and Gardens, Clonakilty Hospital, Foley Funeral Homes Clonakilty and Timoleague and O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty are just a few of the larger projects on his client list.

"Making homes beautiful is at the core of our business," says Trevor passionately.

Your home is your haven and whatever the trend, at the end of the day it has to reflect you and your personal taste. Whether it's eclectic glamour, classic elegance, homely character or something else you're aiming to achieve, Trevor Perrott and his growing team of experienced professionals (Fiona, Sandra, Anne, Michael and Dave) will help you to achieve the home of your dreams.

Visit Perrott's Home Living Interiors (in the same building as J&T Tiles) in Clogheen Industrial Park, just off the Clonakilty Bypass. Phone 023 8850855. [www.perrotts.ie](http://www.perrotts.ie).

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## Special Feature SPRING HOMES

# Protect your family's health by checking your septic tank and household well

Around half a million households in Ireland have a septic tank or packaged sewage treatment system. Results from national inspections show that nearly half of systems fail inspection each year due to lack of maintenance and structural defects. These are a risk to human health and the environment. **Stephen McCarthy**, Inspector, Environmental Protection Agency explains that householders should check their septic tank system and ensure it is operating safely.

### How does a septic tank system work?

Wastewater from toilets, sinks, showers, washing machines and dishwashers goes to the septic tank. The solids settle as a sludge, which needs to be cleaned out over time to prevent blockage. The wastewater may be treated further in packaged treatment systems. The wastewater is then distributed to the soil through a series of shallow underground pipes. This provides natural treatment as the wastewater percolates through the soil.

### What are the risks from a septic tank?

Septic tank wastewater con-

tains bacteria and viruses that are a risk to human health and pollutants that can impact on water in the ground or rivers. The most serious risks are:

- Cross contamination of household wells. Many households have a septic tank and drinking water well on the same site. Studies have found frequent occurrences of bacteria in household wells. Agriculture and deficient septic tanks are the main potential sources of contamination. Infants, pregnant women, the elderly or those with pre-existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable to drinking water

contamination.

- Direct exposure to sewage. Septic tank systems can back up and pond on the open ground if they are not constructed and maintained properly.
- Water pollution. Phosphorus and nitrogen from deficient septic tanks can pollute rivers, especially if piped directly to feeder ditches and streams.

### What do householders need to do?

Householders should ensure their septic tank system is properly built and maintained so that their sewage is properly treated to prevent



## THE FRONT LINE

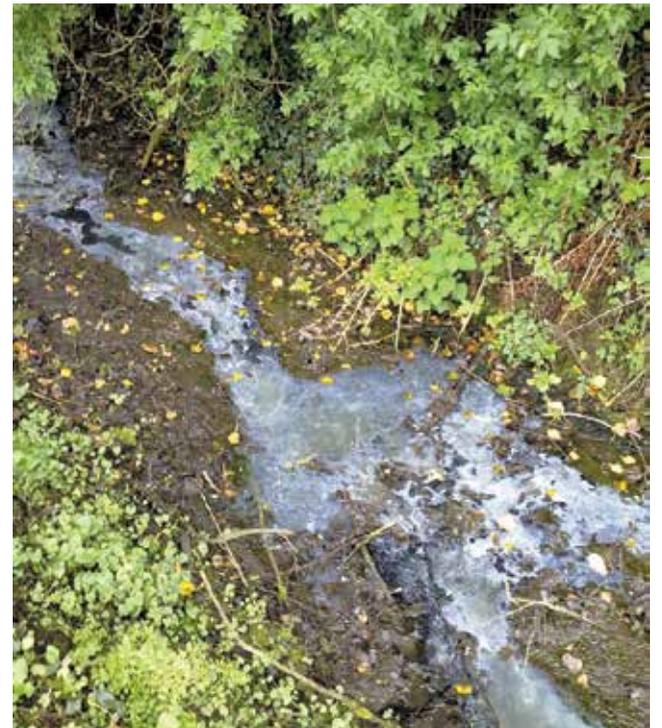
The Environmental Protection Agency is at the front line of environmental protection and policing. It ensures that Ireland's environment is protected, and monitors changes in environmental trends to detect early warning signs of neglect or deterioration.

risk to human health, the environment and to comply with legislation. Householders should as a priority: get their well tested to ensure the water is safe to drink; ensure there are no leaks from their septic tank or ponding on the ground; ensure there is no sewage going to ditches and streams; get their septic tank cleaned out (de-sludged) at appropriate intervals.

You can find further information from leaflets available at [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)

### Grants

There is a grant scheme for structural remedial works to septic tanks that fail under the



Septic tank pollution in a ditch



Septic tank system ponding on the ground.

national inspection system. There is also a grant scheme for improvements to household wells. These are administered by Local Authorities. You can find information on amounts,

eligibility and application forms on the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government website ([www.housing.gov.ie](http://www.housing.gov.ie)) and from your Local Authority.

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## Two thousand Cork families in arrears

Housing and homeless campaigner Fr Peter McVerry has called for the Government's mortgage to rent scheme to be made mandatory for banks when dealing with families in unsustainable debt.

Over 2,000 family home loans are in arrears for two years or more in County Cork, while almost more than 120 mortgage to rent cases have either been completed or are being actively progressed, according to the latest figures.

The scheme allows mortgage holders at risk of losing their homes to switch to paying a fair income-based affordable rent to their local authority while remaining in their current dwellings.

Fr McVerry also called on the incoming Government to increase the scheme's eligibility criteria so that a meaningful attempt can be made to solve many of the 27,000 cases where homeowners have been in arrears for at least two years.

At present, there are 1,200 active cases in the mortgage to rent process nationwide but Fr. McVerry wants to see that number increased significantly this year.

He challenged politicians seeking election to the next Dail to do "something drastic" to end the spiral of misery for so many families.

"What this housing crisis needs right now is radical thinking. Solutions won't happen overnight but if the will is there, then it can happen pretty quickly," said Fr McVerry, a member of the Advisory Board of mortgage to rent operator Home For Life.

"If the next government was serious about tackling this huge mortgage debt legacy from the past decade, it should make it illegal over the next three years to evict people without an offer of mortgage to rent.

"However, the next government has to sit down and change the thresholds which limit the mortgage to rent scheme.

"I am on record as saying that many more families should be included in this scheme because it is the only way for many of them to resolve their current circumstances.

"The stress and misery that people are enduring must be relieved and there must be an immediate review of extending the mortgage to rent boundaries.

"It saddens me to think that every week there are thousands of home-dwellers living in need-less fear of a knock on the door or a visit from the postman."

He urged those who find themselves in such difficulty not to bury their heads in the sand because the arrears just won't go away.

"Instead, I would encourage them to engage with their local MABs people or their lender so that their cases can be dealt with," said Fr McVerry.

"If they do that, then they should be able to stay in their home if they pay a rent like all local authority tenants."



**Martin Kelleher**  
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– units require up to 50% less energy to run
- **QUICK BUILD TIME**
- **CUSTOM DESIGN**
- **LOW IMPACT FOUNDATIONS**
- **ECO FRIENDLY SIP PANELS**  
– provide both a structure and insulation.

Unlike many other units available on the market, our custom built modular homes qualify as houses and meet today's housing regulations.

Our goal is to create amazing, beautiful, well designed living spaces. With over 20 years building experience our highly skilled team want to make your dream home, a reality. All our units come fully certified by an engineer, and we offer a lifetime guarantee on all our structures.



## Building for a bigger life

If living a simpler life in a smaller more flexible space without the burden of a €300,000-plus mortgage sounds attractive, then Big Man Tiny Homes could be the construction company for you.

With the current housing crisis, Irish attitudes to house building are changing; people are looking for smarter, more sustainable and affordable homes; it's about living a bigger life in a smaller space. Modular homes offer a great option for younger people trying to get on to the property ladder or for the older generation looking to downsize.

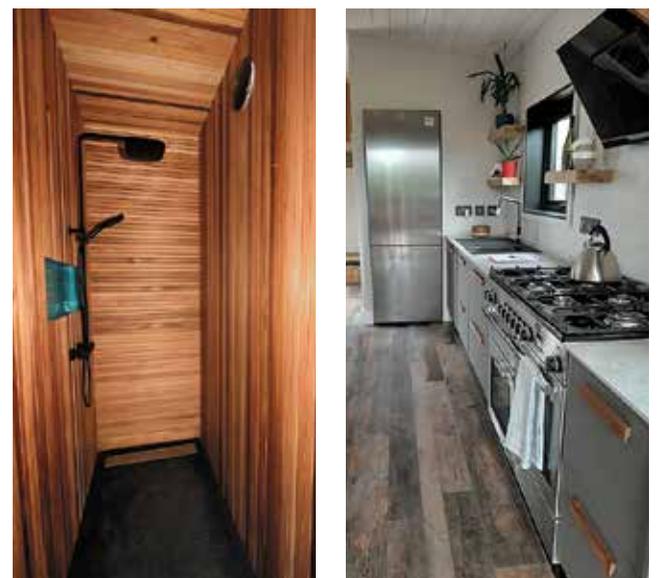
After working on many different projects around the world and Ireland, from bespoke cabins to largescale housing projects, JP Simpson set up Big Man Tiny Homes in 2018. Based in West Cork, the sustainably driven construction company makes cost-effective, energy-efficient, beautiful, tiny (and not so tiny) homes.

"A lot of people can't afford or don't want to be tied down by a huge mortgage," says experienced carpenter JP, who spent a number of years working in the US where the Tiny Homes movement originated. JP lives in a tiny one-bedroom home himself in Garretstown near Kinsale, which he has recently opened up as a show-house to prove just how comfortable and stunning a tiny home can be.

JP's business is now moving in the direction of modular homes, which mainly built off-site, are constructed out of insulated super strong SIP panels and are energy efficient and



*JP Simpson in his own tiny home in Garretstown.*



airtight. These panels are clad in cedar, Siberian larch or metal, depending on required finish.

Modular construction is very popular in countries such as Japan, Germany and Sweden. Starting at €70,000 for a 600sq foot house and going up to €120,000 depending on the finishes, the beauty of modular living, especially if money is tight, is that the houses can be custom built in stages in six to eight weeks at a fraction of the price of a standard concrete block house.

"Modular houses allow a lot

more flexibility," says JP. We can design your dream 1000sq foot home that you can afford by building 500sq feet now and adding on another 500 in five years time," explains JP.

All the houses are A-rated, with double-glazing and LED lighting, so units require 50 per cent less energy to run. They can be built to passive standard if that's what is required.

Big Man Tiny Homes offers a full off-grid package including solar and rainwater harvesting.

"Radiant underfloor heating works fantastically well in these

types of houses," says JP. "The only downside is you can't have a standard wood burning stove, as it just gets too hot."

From design, planning and costing to delivery of a turnkey home, Big Man Tiny Home makes building your home a breeze...all you have to worry about is buying your furniture and white goods.

The units are fully certified as houses, not cabins, to meet today's strict housing regulations and very little maintenance is required.

www.bigmantinyhomes.ie

## Special Feature SPRING HOMES

### The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme FREE INSULATION FOR YOUR HOME

(EXTERNAL, INTERNAL, ATTIC & CAVITY)



Warm up your home and reduce your fuel bills!

#### To be eligible for FREE insulation you must:

- Own your own home and it must be built before 2006

#### And you must be in receipt of one of the following:

- **Fuel Allowance** as part of the National Fuel Scheme
- **Job Seekers Allowance** for over six months and have a child under seven years of age
- **Working Family Payment / One-Parent Family Payment**
- **Domiciliary Care Allowance**
- **Carer's Allowance** and live with the person you are caring for (effective from August 1, 2018)

#### What is the better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme?

The BEWHS aims to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of homes occupied by low income households.

To apply for this FREE scheme call us on: 027-52266 or email [finbarr@wcdp.ie](mailto:finbarr@wcdp.ie)  
West Cork Development Partnership,  
The Warner Centre, Barrack St, Bantry, Co. Cork



## Better Energy Warmer Home scheme now accepting applications for Winter 2019/2020

The Better Energy Warmer Home scheme (BEWH) is a free insulation scheme delivered by West Cork Development Partnership and funded by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Póbal. It funds energy efficiency improvements in the homes of the elderly and vulnerable, making their homes more comfortable, healthier and more cost effective to run. The aim of the scheme is to reduce Energy consumption and help address the issue of fuel poverty, leading to a reduction in household fuel bills and more comfortable, warmer living conditions.

The BEWH scheme is available only to homes that meet

the following criteria:

- Owner occupied non-Local Authority homes
- Constructed before 2006
- The owner is in receipt of one of the following:
  - Fuel Allowance as part of the National Fuel Scheme
  - Job Seekers Allowance for over six months and have a child under seven years of age
  - Working Family Payment
  - One-Parent Family Payment
  - Domiciliary Care Allowance
  - Carer's Allowance and live with the person you are caring for (effective from 1st August 2018)

The BEWH scheme service involves the installation of standard energy efficiency

measures that are appropriate to the eligible household, subject to SEAI survey, budget allocation and available capacity. The service is provided at no cost to the household and the measures currently available under this scheme are:

- Attic insulation
- Draught proofing
- Lagging jackets
- Low energy light bulbs
- Cavity wall insulation
- Energy advice
- External wall insulation
- Internal wall insulation
- Heating system upgrades including controls (where no central heating exists)
- External windows (replacement of single glaze windows only as part of wall insulation upgrade)
- Mechanical ventilation.

If you feel that you are eligible or know someone that is please contact the Warmer Homes Scheme Team on 027 52266 or email [finbarr@wcdp.ie](mailto:finbarr@wcdp.ie).

For homes that do not qualify for the BEWHS, WCDP can also offer grants for homeowners (including landlords) of up to €6000 for external wall insulation, €1100 towards cavity wall and attic insulation. House must be built before 2006 to qualify. NSAI & SEAI registered Contractor - I.D. no 16256. Please contact 027 52266 for more information

## Shutter up for a beautiful living space

Based in West Cork, Castle Freke Shutters and Blinds was set up in November 2017 after James O'Driscoll saw a gap in the market for a company

specialising in skilled shutter installation. At the time, James had been working for Hillary's blinds company for seven years. Before that he had years of experience in carpentry and building work.

Castle Freke Shutters and Blinds is all about providing a quality service to its customers, providing a full service, from the initial sales call where you will be advised in choosing your shutters or blinds through to the ordering and fitting of your quality product.

"There is a good market for quality shutters because they add value to a home; they look beautiful but they really add value with their energy saving properties. They can also prevent a lot of heat escaping through windows," explains James.

"They are also valued as a lifetime job with no painting or other maintenance needed, a quick wipe occasionally for dust and they look like new again."

Shutters suit any type of home, from cottages to new builds, and any style of interior design as they come in various



styles and colours. Because of James' skill, Castle Freke Shutters and Blinds can fit shutters to the most awkward of window shapes, where other types of window dressing just wouldn't work. If you check out the Gallery section of the company's website, you'll see recent work on both arched and triangular windows to give you an idea of what can be achieved.

"There are five ranges available at different price points, from MDF to ABS to hardwoods, so there's something for every budget," James explains. "All are made to last for a lifetime."

There are five different lou-

vre sizes available, 23 smooth painted finishes and 22 wood stains that allow the beauty of the hardwood to shine through. There are also many different frame types to choose from.

So, even if you have tilt and turn windows, Castle Freke Shutters and Blinds can provide shutters that will allow you to open your windows without obstruction.

The company also does shaped shutters for triangular and arched openings.

Castle Freke Shutters and Blinds supplies and fits the following products: Roller Blinds including motorised rollers; Roman Blinds; Vertical Blinds; Venetian blinds (wood and faux wood); Aluminium Venetian including Perfect Fit, which fit directly to your windows or doors; and Pleated conservatory blinds, which also come in perfect fit frames.

Castle Freke Shutters and Blinds is available for sales calls six days a week, from 9am to 9pm. Call James on 086 6613989 or email [info@castlefrekeshuttersandblinds.ie](mailto:info@castlefrekeshuttersandblinds.ie). No job is too big or too small. [www.castlefrekeshuttersandblinds.ie](http://www.castlefrekeshuttersandblinds.ie)

## Castle Freke Shutters & Blinds

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## Special Feature SPRING HOMES

# Use the sun's raw energy to create your own electricity



**Paddy Rose**, Renewable Energy Manager at Advanced Heating & Energy Systems Ltd explains some of benefits of a Solar PV system and why it's very much the way of the future.

Paddy has over 15 years experience with renewable energy, primarily with solar thermal. He is also a part-time lecturer at CIT Cork on solar thermal and PV.

### What is Solar Photovoltaic and how does it work?

Translated literally Photo-voltaic means lights-electricity. Solar Photovoltaic (PV) technology converts sunlight directly to electricity by means of PV cells made of semiconductor materials.

The amount of panels equates to a certain kw output, for example a 2kw system, 3kw system or 4kw system but we will come back to that...

The different components of a PV system include PV modules, which are commonly called PV panels; one or more batteries; a charge regulator or controller for a stand-alone

system; an inverter for a utility-grid-connected system and wiring; and mounting hardware or a framework.

The direct current is isolated with switches and is then sent to an inverter; the inverter changes the direct current to alternating current, which we use in our homes and factories.

We size a PV system in an existing building from the amount of electricity used annually. Other factors that determine what size system is suitable is the system's compatibility with the building in question, whether it's domestic or commercial, single phase or three phase and so on.

### What is the difference between Solar Photovoltaic and Solar Thermal Panels?

The principle behind both technologies is the same – they use solar radiation (energy from the sun) to create usable energy.

Solar thermal transfers this energy through a solar panel, either flat plate solar or tubed solar, to the water cylinder in a house, heating the water.

Solar PV uses the sun's raw energy to create electricity, which is used first, before grid electricity, to support any item in the building that is drawing power. It can also be diverted to assist with hot water

production.

### How well does Solar PV work in the Irish climate?

We are always reliant on the weather conditions when it comes to renewable energy. However, in general we have good results from Ireland. We always explain to customers that a PV system is dependent on the climatic conditions, and clearly outline how production will vary based on this, so the customer will understand how their system will be of benefit to them.

### My house is 10 years old and is heated by oil. If I get Solar Photovoltaic panels on my home, will they work in conjunction with the oil burner or will I have to change my heating system completely.

Solar PV has nothing to do with the heating and the oil boiler/gas boiler. In this particular instance the PV system has the capability based on design to be diverted to heat the domestic hot water cylinder. However to support heating

with PV is not really possible. Some heat pumps can be supported by PV (electricity) in cost reduction, but again this is based on the design of the system

### What will adding Solar PV panels to my home do for my energy rating?

Yes, it does improve your energy rating. A BER assessor is the right person to advise on how much it can change for the better

### What kind of cost am I looking at?

A system can start from €3000 upwards. The electricity you use annually will determine the system size to install.

### My electricity is approx €120 every two months and I spend approx €500-€600 a year. What kind of savings can I make to my electricity and my heating bills?

Different rates may apply but if you take a cost of a unit of electricity as being .15 cent

without the VAT, then if you spend €120 per two months that is about 800 units per two months. 800 units per two months over one year is approx. 4800 units per year. So if you install a 4kw system, it will give you approx. 3700 units per year and 3700 units per year at .15 cent is €555 in potential savings!

I say potential savings because there are a lot of variations to be taken into account from the weather conditions to how we live in the house. For example when a system is producing 3kw per hour and if during that time no one is in the house and only one kw is being used by the standby energy in the house, the problem is that 2 kw goes back to the grid wasted.

We have a solar diverter, which is used to heat domestic hot water in case this happens but you will still have losses, as we may not always be capable of using the free electricity.




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Paddy Rose, Renewable Energy Manager at Advanced Heating & Energy Systems Ltd, has over 15 years experience with renewable energy, primarily with solar thermal. For more information contact Paddy on 087 0521738 or email paddy@advancedheating.ie

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## Special Feature SPRING HOMES

# A home with a view

Local couple Jason Fleming and Síle Burns talk to **West Cork People** about building their family home on a site on Jason's family farm looking out over the stunning Dunworley Bay in Butlerstown.



Síle works as a physiotherapist with the HSE in Skibbereen and Rossbarbery and Jason works as a marketing operations manager with Global Shares in Clonakilty. Both have a huge interest in GAA and played for their local team Barryroe. Married in 2017, having rented for years in Clonakilty and Courtmacsherry, building their own home was the dream. Where did they start?

"It's a beautiful site with a view of Dunworley bay in the distance. The field itself had a slope on it so we had to dig into the field to flatten the site. That went well as there was no rock to dig out or break," explains Jason.

They started their planning process in January 2015 with a pre-planning meeting where they were able to get agreement on the exact site to use. Over the next 18 months, they went through three submis-

sions before finally getting planning permission.

"Third time was a charm!" says Jason. "You do get your hopes up each time. It's a challenging process. It helped that we were flexible in our expectations. We could have gone with a bungalow if needed. We were confident that we could shape any house into the home we wanted."

With permission secured, the builders started work in October 2016. Having spent time over three planning submissions, the design of the final house required few changes and the building went smoothly and on time. Twelve months later in October 2017, Síle and Jason moved into their new home.

"It is a two-storey, three-bedroom house," says Jason. "It's more or less finished inside. We did take the decision to focus on complet-

ing work inside rather than trying to finish rooms while living in the house. This meant we neglected the outside of the house! But we have years to finish all that."

From the start, Síle and Jason employed professionals, and this was one of the reasons why they think their build went well.

"We hired an engineer, Ray O'Leary, to help us through the planning process. Once we were ready to send out tenders, we got a Quantity Surveyor to look through the plans and cost them for us. This saved us any Dermot Bannon-like surprises!"

Local builders, Lislevane Construction, won the contract and built the house to a builder's finish. Síle and Jason then managed the project to completion with the help of family and friends.

"We did as much of the



finishing work ourselves as we could – with the help of family we painted the whole interior of the house over a bank holiday weekend.

"We also laid all the laminate wood flooring in bedrooms and the living room ourselves. My brother is a qualified carpenter, which helped us greatly," says Jason.

Knowing what you want from your house is key to design. Many people forget that a house is built for how you want to use it. Síle and Jason were very focused on this part of it.

"We both wanted a large open plan kitchen/sunroom/living area that would be the focal point of the house. That

"Third time was a charm!" says Jason. "You do get your hopes up each time. It's a challenging process. It helped that we were flexible in our expectations. We could have gone with a bungalow if needed. We were confident that we could shape any house into the home we wanted."

connects to the living room, which can be part of the bigger space or closed off with a sliding door," explains Síle. "We also wanted as much sunlight as possible, so the house was always planned to face south. The only non-negotiable part of the design was my walk-in wardrobe!"

Much research went into

their heating system and they went for a mix of an oil boiler with solar panels. The option of an air to water heat pump was not feasible due to their proximity to the sea and the damaging effects of salt in the air.

"The solar panels are extremely efficient at heating our water in the house," Jason says

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about the heating systems. “We can use this exclusively for six to seven months of the year.

“We were also quite particular on the type of stove that we wanted – a wood burning modern style with an exposed flue rather than the traditional style with mantelpiece.”

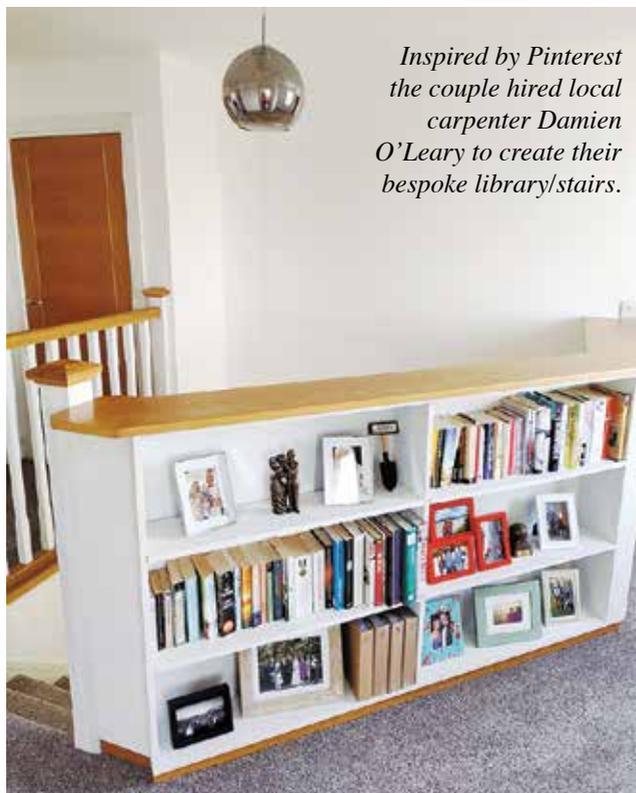
They also thought carefully about the use of space. Instead of traditional stair spindles, they turned this space into a bookcase. To add a traditional touch to their kitchen, they sourced a Butler ceramic style sink from a salvage yard in Blarney. It's worth looking around for key design elements that can change the feel of a new house for the better.

In talking about the main challenges, the most important was always to get the budget right. During the build, it was difficult to organise with work, but they managed to visit the site as much as possible during construction and kept changes to a minimum while maintaining their timelines.

Building on your own site raises issues with services and, with no possibility of a mains connection, they used the well-known borer, Martin Harte, to drill their well. With the local water being quite hard, they had to also install a special filtration system. An unexpected expense but one that many rural new builds incur.

With everything in place, the last stage is always down to personal taste and practicality. Sile talks about their design ideas.

“We wanted a traditional home but with a modern twist. It's good idea to look online at sites like Pinterest for inspiration. Our shaker style kitchen is grey with oak counter tops. We did want wooden floors but were advised to use tiles instead. We found good ones with a wooden look and they hide the little bits of dirt really



Inspired by Pinterest the couple hired local carpenter Damien O'Leary to create their bespoke library/stairs.

well! Jason's brother-in-law, Damien Whelton, fitted the kitchen and counters. We love how well that has turned out.”

The pay-off for such a long project is living in a home that your own ideas have created. Sile loves her sunroom and

thinks there is nowhere nicer to sit with a cup of coffee, a good book, and the Atlantic view in the distance. For Jason, it is being bunkered down in the living room, the stove blazing, and the winter cold kept well outside.

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“Our builders, Lislevane Construction, were great,” says Jason. “They have a great team of tradespeople on hand to finish everything to a standard that we couldn't have been happier with. J&T Tiles in Clonakilty supplied all the flooring and sanitary ware. They are excellent. And Jason's brother-in-law, Damien Whelton, was superb. We had the best people working for us and helping us along the way.”

For others starting out on this process, Jason and Sile shared the most important elements in planning, construction and finishing.

“Do attend a pre-planning meeting before you think of any design for your house. Make sure you have a Quantity Surveyor to cost everything. Visit as many houses as possible and don't be shy about measuring rooms or windows to see how a good home

works. Ask for advice. Anyone who has done this knows a lot more at the end than in the beginning. Pick a builder you can trust. Look at their other projects and talk to their clients.”

Does it feel like your home? “Very much. We love it. And our first son Oisín arrived in September 2019. So, it's a real family home now.”



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## Special Feature SPRING HOMES

# West Cork company 'OpenOut' offers options for homes suffering from poor connectivity

OpenOut is a new West Cork based business that is providing an innovative solution to a common problem in our region – poor mobile coverage and broadband connectivity. One of the founding partners is well-respected businessman **Peter Walsh**. Peter speaks to West Cork People about the service OpenOut provides.



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“We are a company founded out of desperation to bridge the gap that householders and businesses experience in rural areas with mobile signal coverage,” says Peter. “At OpenOut, myself and my business partner Catherine O’Sullivan – who is an IT expert – are determined to provide creative and effective solutions for connectivity problems in rural areas. Flexible working and entrepreneurship is vital to the economy here in West Cork. So many people work at least part of the time at home and they can’t be hanging out the kitchen



window whilst talking to customers or emailing. We’ve also found a need with holiday home owners who don’t want to sign up for broadband – even if it is available – and prefer to just use their mobile data for short stays. We’ve also provided solutions for rural based businesses and farmers.

“The concept of our system is very simple,” Peter explains. “An outdoor antenna captures the mobile signal from a nearby mast and feeds it to a repeater unit, which will enhance the weaker outdoor signal and feed it to an indoor antenna. This then re-broadcasts the boosted signals indoors, enabling you to make and receive calls or use mobile data where available. Whether your signal is poor due to the position of the house, thickness of the walls or insulation, our system will give you back your signal.”

“We’ve performed many installations around West Cork, and the owners are delighted with the results. We’re fine-tuning our product and service and we’re now hoping to expand Nationwide!”

Peter answers the common questions people have

when looking at the OpenOut product:

**Q: Is this equipment legal to use?**

A: Yes absolutely. There have been news reports recently of the Regulator cracking down on illegal boosters because they can interfere with mobile signal and even threaten emergency services such as the Fire and Ambulance service. Not only is our equipment specifically designed to work in challenging Irish terrain, it’s COMREG compliant because it uses set frequencies and intelligent systems and it is fully compatible with all Irish cellular operators.

**Q: Does this equipment work with all networks?**

A: Yes, there are three major cellular operators in Ireland – Eir, Vodafone and Three. There are some other virtual operators like Post Mobile, Lyca Mobile and Tesco Mobile but they use the networks of the major operators. Our equipment is fully compatible with all of them.

**Q: I have some poor signal in some parts of my premises,**

**mostly near the windows. Will this equipment improve that?**

A: Of course, that’s what our equipment does. It captures the existing weak outdoor signal and boosts its quality and strength. It then re-broadcasts it throughout your premises giving you a much-improved signal to make and receive calls. If you have two-three bars available outside of your premises you will probably get full five bars indoors and if you only get one-two bars outside, you may get three-four bars indoors. This is to comply with regulations to avoid interference with other other RF signals.

**Q: What about mobile data? Will I get 3G or 4G connectivity as well?**

A: Our equipment is fully capable of providing mobile data connectivity as well, depending if you have 3G or 4G signal available in your area. It is important to understand that our equipment does not generate any signals on its own, instead it boosts the existing outdoor signal into your home/premises.

**Q. Does this equipment work in very remote areas with no mobile signals at all?**

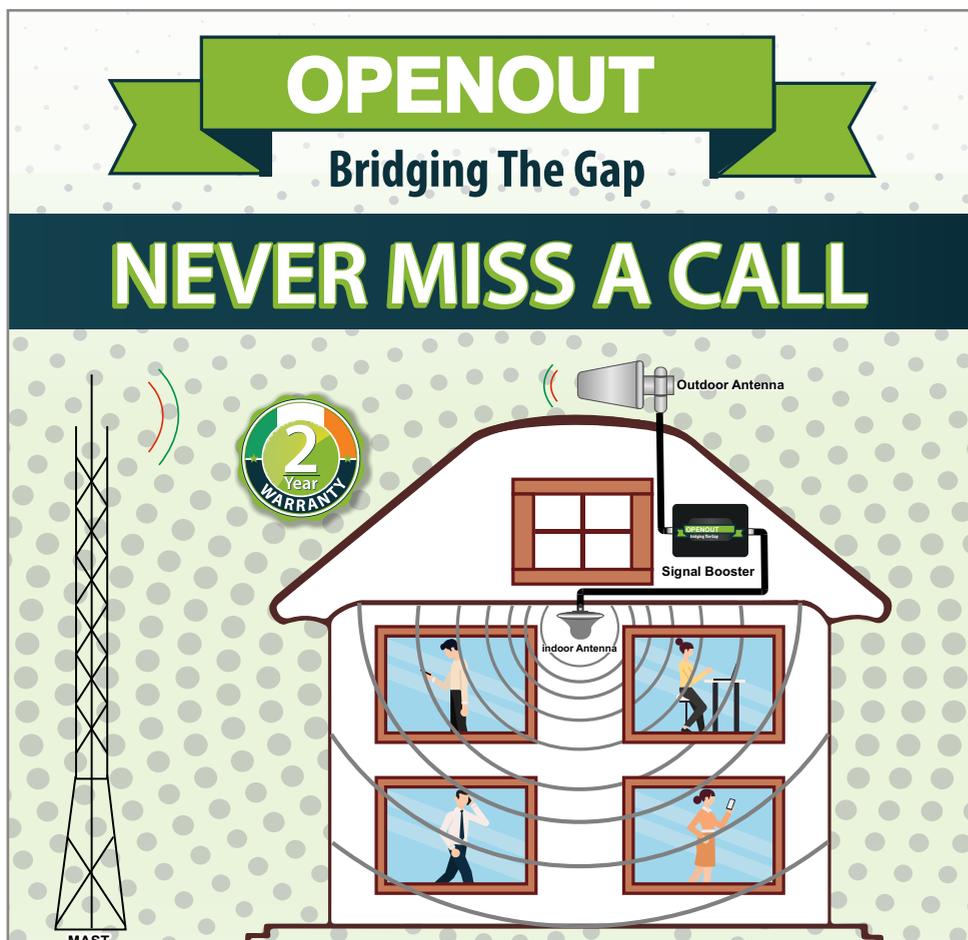
A: Our equipment does not generate any signal where there is none. So if there is no signal/mast in your area, it cannot work.

To find out more about OpenOut’s service call the team on 023 8845599 or visit [www.OpenOut.ie](http://www.OpenOut.ie). You can also email [inbox@OpenOut.ie](mailto:inbox@OpenOut.ie).

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## SPRING HOMES

### €400 million invested in Ireland's clean energy transition through SEAI programmes in 2019

Last year, the Government, through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), invested €140m in sustainable energy upgrades and projects. Among the beneficiaries were; 24,700 homeowners, 57 communities, and 4,700 purchasers of electric vehicles. SEAI highlighted these figures, as it reported on its outcomes for 2019. These citizens and businesses are now using less energy, enjoying lower day to day costs, are better protected from carbon tax increases and are taking positive climate action.

Last year – to further promote innovation in sustainable energy – SEAI committed €11 million to 50 innovative RD&D projects, including €1m from several strategic partnerships. Among the new initiatives in 2019 was the inaugural Energy Research and Policy Conference hosted in collaboration with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, which focused on the transformation of Ireland's electricity sector. SEAI's policy analysis team prepared Ireland's energy projections and completed a major

upgrade to the National Energy Modelling Framework, forming the evidence base for climate action.

William Walsh, CEO of SEAI says: "2019 was a very significant year for the sustainable energy transition and climate action. There was a massive rise in advocacy for greater action, most notably in the form of the school's climate strikes, which happened at a global scale. Domestically, 2019 saw the publication of the Government's Climate Action Plan, which commits to more than 180 actions across all sectors of society and the economy. For SEAI, 2019 was remarkable in the scale of budget allocated to our ever-increasing portfolio of programmes and activities. We take great pride in the truly transformative effect which our programmes have on the homeowners, communities and businesses with whom we engage, helping them to lower their energy costs and play a vital role in our clean energy transition."

Ensuring high standards of energy upgrades is critical to the sustainable energy transition.

Under its market surveillance role, SEAI worked with stakeholders to improve awareness and compliance with energy labelling regulations. Energy labels help people make more informed buying decisions. This work included more than 400 energy and eco-design market surveillance investigations covering manufacturers, appliance retail outlets and tyre resellers. SEAI is also responsible for administering the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme in which large energy suppliers must deliver energy savings. 258 non-domestic projects and 48,000 home energy upgrades were carried out under this scheme in 2019.

Walsh concluded, "As Ireland moves away from fossil fuels, the SEAI plays a key role in providing actionable policy advice and innovative supports to deliver the necessary change."

Householders and businesses looking to be part of the movement on climate action and avail of Government supports in 2020 are encouraged to visit [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie).

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Special Feature **SPRING HOMES**

Be inspired....

Furniture



This teal velvet 2-seater would be a great accent colour item in a neutral room. The spindle legs and scalloped back, in a splayed shell design with deep fan pleating, gives it a cool 1960s retro feel. Available from **Abbey Furniture**, Skibbereen.



Design your own seating...

Aesthetics are undeniably important but functionality, comfort and longevity play just as important a role as great design – you want beautiful furniture that will last for many years to come.

Check out Stressless at **Glentree Furniture in Dunmanway**, a range of chairs and sofas that is made bespoke to your design choices of leather or fabric in 61 colours. Pictured (*above left*) is the Stressless Dover chair and footrest in Sparrow Blue – pair with neutral shades, such as light greys, to give your room a sense of calm – and (*top*) the Stressless Buckingham sofa in a

beautiful copper shade that will bring warmth and cosiness to any room. The Buckingham has individually reclining seats and, available in both high and low back, ensures maximum support for the entire body.

Glentree are also exclusive agents in the south of Ireland for Primavera, who offer made-to-measure sofas and corner sofas in fabrics to die for. This green suede effect modular sofa (*above right*) gives a nod to the 60s with its boxy angles but is also very modern and cool.

Wear it well...

The coming change of season could not be more welcome and brings with it a sense of renewal as the first buds break through. The easiest way to bring a similar freshness into your home is by updating your wall finishes. There's nothing as fresh as a good lick of paint! All paints and wallpapers featured below from **Fusion Home Interiors**, Skibbereen.

Walls

Flooring

In 2020 you'll see interior designers using eye-catching patterns to turn floors into statement pieces – particularly in rooms that are otherwise quite pared-back in colour and design. You can achieve the same effect with a herringbone or chevron design in wood flooring – a classic but by no means boring choice. Flooring trends don't change nearly as often as fashion (thank goodness) so this interior update will bring you years of satisfaction.

This Barista Oak Herringbone design (*above left and right*) is from **Glentree Furniture** in Dunmanway and comes in a variety of distinctive shades to fit in with cool or warm schemes.



*Little Greene* is an eclectic collection of contemporary wallpapers based on original designs from the UK National Trust's revered property portfolio. Comprising 40 colourways over seven designs, the collection represents 200 years of timeless pattern, from early 18th to early 20th century. Each wallpaper has been recreated from originals in National Trust properties, including papers still adorning ancient walls, fragments conserved in archive drawers and even preserved rolls found in the back of an attic.



Wild Garlic from *Colourtrend paints* Weather Collection is the perfect backdrop to showcase the accessories that give a space character. White tones can be mistaken to simply be devoid of colour, this is not the case – every tone, no matter how light has a hue. Wild Garlic has a warm grey hint and is perfectly accented with sharper whites, such as Milk Teeth, that showcase the warmth of Wild Garlic perfectly.



*Farrow & Ball* has a new exciting collaboration with London's Natural History Museum, inspired by Werner's Nomenclature of Colours, the original book which classified colour in nature. Their new collection 'Colour by Nature' features 16 colours drawn directly from the natural world, all created in eco-friendly water based paints to help you bring the true colours of nature into your home. Pictured is 'Lake Red'.

# Special Feature SPRING HOMES

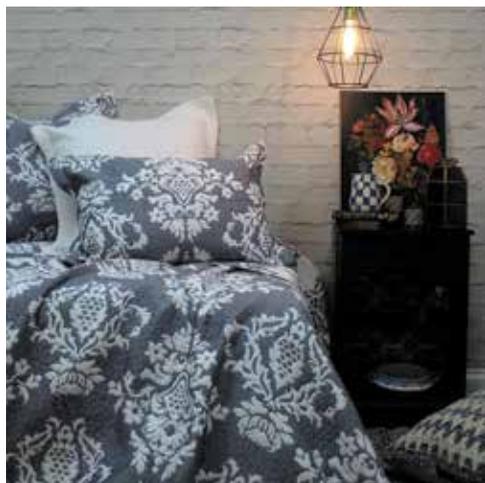
## Soft Furnishings



Gerardine O'Mahony of **O'Mahony Interiors** in Enniskeane, is really excited this year about the stunning printed velvets that are coming from the fabric houses.

Velvets make up beautifully as curtains but are also a wonderful upholstery material – so your headboard or a tired old chair could be reupholstered in a very on trend design. O'Mahony Interiors has an extensive design library carrying beautiful velvets for any budget.

## Windows



A bedspread in your chosen colour scheme really ties a room together... and means your bedroom is still 'fit-to-be-seen' on linen washdays! This soft blue/grey bedspread is machine washable and 2 tog for extra warmth – from **Abbey Furniture**, Skibbereen.



The new 'Twist' roller blinds collection from Luxaflex has three exclusive new trend ranges with earthy greens, soft blues and pleasing pinks. The four new designs available in 12 colours feature fluid, natural leaf shapes with fluttering shadows and modern designs with angular lines. Available from **West Cork Carpets & Curtains**, Clonakilty

## Art



Stunning fine art photography prints of the West Cork coast and landscape, by **photographer Stephen Hayes**, are available in limited and open editions at [www.stephenhayesphotography.com](http://www.stephenhayesphotography.com).



*Everybody knows this is nowhere.*  
Oil on canvas, 110 x 90cm

**Artist Michael McSwiney** lives in Clonakilty. In his powerful paintings he portrays a world of panoramas of land and sea. [www.michaelmcswiney.com](http://www.michaelmcswiney.com)

## Light of your life...

Lighting should not be a rushed afterthought. You can manipulate your home's atmosphere just by how you position the lighting and the kind of fittings you use. Give these beautiful statement light fixtures plenty of visual space to stand on their own merits.

## Lighting



This pendant light (*above left*) rise and falls as needed and is ideal for kitchen islands or dining tables. The simple yet bold design of this globe light (*above*) is a novel idea for a reading lamp and would also look amazing in a hall or foyer. Both are from **Hegarty Lighting** in Clonakilty.



The high ceilings of modern builds allow for statement pieces such as this contemporary brushed copper ribbon light (*above*) from **Cork Lighting & Interiors** – a really show stopping fitting that also creates a beautiful light pattern on your walls and floor. Also from this lovely store is this funky bathroom light (*below*), a modern twist on Hollywood dressing table lights.



## Special Feature

## VALENTINES &amp; SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

## When love finds you

“You don’t find love, it finds you...” Love found Peter Fitzpatrick and Aleks Bartus-Winiarska in a playground in Clonakilty when two halves – one Irish origin, one Polish – suddenly joined together to make a whole.

Both came from broken relationships; both had children; both shared a love of craft and music and held similar outlooks on life.

Their first date was over coffee...they talked, and talked, and talked some more. Just over six months later they were living together and this year, three-and-a-half years on, they are planning on getting married. It will be a small family affair on the beach.

With six children between them, life today is happy if busy and sometimes a little bit

crazy!

Originally from Co Laois, Peter’s interest in wood crafting started with his father. However, it wasn’t until years later, living in Clonakilty, he re-engaged with the craft out of necessity.

In 2014, seeking an alternative way to recover from anxiety and depression, Peter rediscovered his love of music and voice and founded The Happiness Ensemble, which is still running in 49 North Street, Skibbereen today.

“I wanted a didgeridoo and couldn’t afford it,” he explains simply. Needs must and, after a few attempts, Peter’s instruments were soon good enough to sell. He then branched into furniture, making rustic pieces like tables and stools out of driftwood and pieces of wood.

A native of Poland, Aleks graduated from the Department of Ceramics and Glass at the Academy of Fine Arts in Wroclaw. She has been living in Clonakilty since 2008. Her luxurious felted clothing is

very much in demand.

“I’ve learned so much from Aleks,” says Peter, who is now making ceramics as well. “My style is more primitive or rustic,” he explains

Together, we have huge potential,” says Aleks. “Peter is so creative and learns so quickly. We have learned so much from each other.”

Last August, the couple opened a pop-up craft shop in Clonakilty for one month to sell their crafts. A month turned into five. “We were overwhelmed with the support,” says Peter. They are currently looking for a permanent premises in Clonakilty.

“Planning anything is our biggest difficulty,” says Aleks. With so many children, you can’t control what will come up and inevitably your plans have to change. And when you are in business, I don’t believe you should use your kids as an excuse.”

Aleks admits to being the business head in the relationship. Peter’s approach to life

and work is more relaxed. He’s the dreamer. “I am stricter than Peter. I need structure and in my head, if I leave something for later, it won’t be done,” she says.

Their approach might sometimes be different but they are both in agreement that family is what is most important.

“We also give each other space when we need it,” says Peter “and while we may have different priorities, we very much respect each other’s boundaries and ideologies. We sing from the same hymn sheet.”

“Sometimes I push myself too hard,” says Aleks “and Peter reminds me to relax.”

“It cuts both ways,” says Peter “we both remind each other of what’s important and strike a good balance together.”

“We all have bad days, life can be difficult, but we have each other and our family,” says Aleks.



## Handmade Valentines – past and present

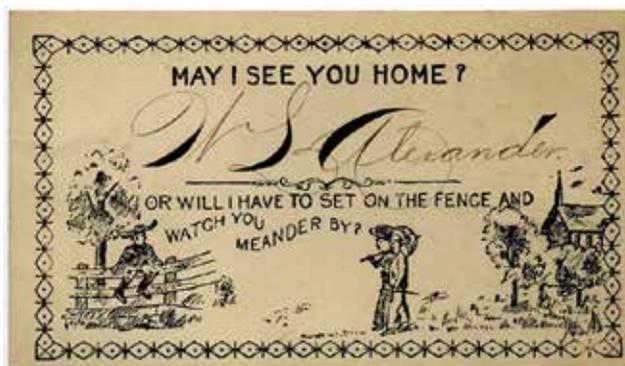


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**Valentine's Workshops Feb 14 & 15!**



The earliest Valentine message that we know about is a poem written in 1415. It was written by the 21-year-old Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his 16-year-old wife. Unfortunately Charles did not get to present the poem with a bunch of roses and cheeky bottle of vin rouge, as he was imprisoned in England when he wrote it. Even more unfortunately his wife never read it as she died before receiving it. Charles spent the next 25 years in the Tower and the poem is still there.

But the idea was a good one and it caught on explains visual storyteller Jenny Dempsey. People have been making and sending Valentines ever since.

Some of the most attractive Valentines were created

in the Regency Era. Known as Puzzle Purses they were hand-painted, hand-folded pieces of origami containing poems. If you fancy making your own puzzle purse there are a number of websites offering templates.

Or perhaps you have fake canary and an old piece of lace that you’re keeping for that special moment...In the Victorian age, Valentine cards really took off. In general, the Victorians were known for an excess of ornament and a dubious interpretation of historic and Asian styles. Their Valentines did not disappoint.

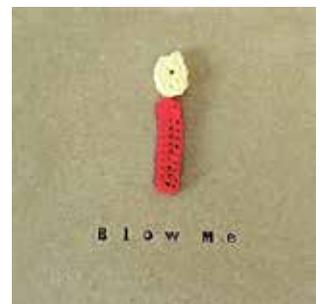
Similar to the paper craft movement today, the cards were multi-layered affairs with embossing, stamping and a variety of embellishment. Many of these extraordinary cards are held by the Museum



of London and can be viewed online.

Another type of Victorian card – this time from America – is worth a mention. Not strictly a Valentine, this is a ‘flirtation card’. There were used like so: A lady and gentleman meet on a street. They exchange glances. As they walk on, the woman dangles a handkerchief – if she is interested in the man following up on the glance. If he is equally curious, the two strike up a conversation. One gives the other a flirtation card. And a date is planned.

Is the request to see the lady home a chivalrous concern to her personal safety or is it a request to come inside and come upstairs? Less subtle yet totally charming are these modern day cards from Ireland. They are made by ammiahandmade who has less cheeky versions also.



And it is fitting to end in Ireland, as St Valentine himself has a strong link with our country. In the early 1800s, excavations near Rome yielded some remains and relics believed to be associated with Valentine. These were divided among European cities. There are pieces in Vienna; Prague; Malta; Madrid; what might be a finger in Poland, his skull is in Rome. And his heart? Well, that’s truly in the right place, for that now resides in Ireland.

Jenny Dempsey is a visual storyteller with an interest in design and heritage. She is the author of *The Ladies Guide series – a series of time-travel guides for women. The first book of deals with holding a dinner party in eighteenth century Cork and is available to buy. The second, due to be published this year, focuses on how to get a man in Regency Ireland. See [jennydempsey-design.com](http://jennydempsey-design.com) for details.*



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## Special Feature

## VALENTINES &amp; SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

## Our day: A family occasion

Rhona O'Neill from Clonakilty and Dublin native Stephen Moffatt were first introduced to each other six years ago in London by mutual friends. The pharmacist and policy officer got engaged in their apartment in Clapham just before Christmas in December 2018 and got married in Fernhill House Hotel in Clonakilty on August 10, 2019. Rhona takes some time out of her honeymoon to share her wedding planning experience and tell **West Cork People** why this particular venue is so important to her.



incredible to have had so many of our friends and family members there to celebrate with us! Other highlights would have to be the amazing food and our band, The Choons, was fantastic; the dancefloor was packed all night!

**Where did you go on honeymoon?**

We spent a couple of nights in the Castle in Castletownsend straight after the wedding. It was the ideal location to relax after the weekend. We then went to Sri Lanka in January.

**What are your hopes for the future?**

Hopefully to spend more time with our families in Dublin and West Cork with our families.

**Do you have any advice or tips for other couples about to tie the knot?**

Have fun!

**Why did you choose that particular venue?**

I'm quite sentimental, so the thought of getting married in the same venue as my parents, as well as many other family and friends, was really special. Stephen has become a fan of Fernhill and Clonakilty over the years so he was equally as happy with the choice.

My Uncle and Aunt, Mike and Teresa O'Neill, being the proprietors of Fernhill, was another big selling point for me because I have the best childhood memories of playing in and around the hotel with my cousins and, as an adult, spending my Christmas's and other special occasions there surrounded by family. I'm very proud of the hard work and the dedication they, and my cousins Neil, Michael and Gearoid, have to the wedding and hospitality industry, it's so apparent in all aspects of the business.

things wedding-related and she definitely did the lion's share of work for our wedding!

**What was your favourite part of the day?**

The ceremony was very special for both of us and it was

**Did you have anything out-of-the-ordinary planned for the day?**

We really wanted our ceremony to be informal and personal so we asked two of our close friends to officiate the marriage. It was a huge thing to ask of them but they did exceptionally well and we're very grateful to them both. It meant a lot to us. We wrote the ceremony and vows ourselves; choosing our favourite passages and poems to be read out by other friends and family.

**What were the most enjoyable and most stressful or challenging parts of the wedding planning experience?**

We only had seven months to get everything arranged and we both live in London so that was quite tricky. We were so lucky to have Ann Cullinane, the wedding co-ordinator in Fernhill, to help us. She was fantastic! Ann has the answers to all the questions plus she asks the questions you wouldn't even think of! My mother Anne was also an amazing help. As the owner of The Flower Basket in Clonakilty, she is well versed in all

## Truly vintage wedding showcase at Eccles Hotel and Spa in February

The fabulous Eccles Hotel and Spa in Glengarriff will host a special wedding showcase on Sunday, February 23, from 1pm until 5pm. The fair will give couples that are planning their dream wedding the chance to see this iconic venue, as it would be on the big day.

Eccles Hotel and Spa has a rich history of hosting weddings at this idyllic part of West Cork. Over the years it has also welcomed distinguished guests such as WB Yeats, Maureen O'Hara, Maeve Binchy and Pippa Middleton to name a few.

A wedding at Eccles Hotel and Spa offers the perfect blend of tradition and class. A varied choice of Wedding packages are available, from €70.

At the showcase you'll have the opportunity to see the Innacullin ballroom set up in all its splendour, with glittering Waterford Crystal chandeliers and show-stopping views of Bantry Bay. You'll have the opportunity to meet wedding co-ordinator Rose O'Sullivan and the Eccles wedding team, have a show-around of the bridal suite, the newly refurbished bedrooms and the recently opened Spa at Eccles.

You'll taste the show-stopping food of head chef Eddie Attwell, with samples of our delicious wedding menu options; most locally sourced food from West Cork artisan food producers, sure to tempt your taste buds.

Couples are welcome to stay over on Saturday night, from €98 per couple including breakfast. On Saturday evening the ballroom will be set with candles and lanterns lighting the way from the island walk.

The wedding showcase is open from 1pm on Sunday February 23, with a welcome glass of prosecco and canape reception for you on arrival.

To confirm your attendance at the Eccles Hotel February wedding showcase or to ask any questions in advance, contact the weddings team by email on [weddings@eccleshotel.com](mailto:weddings@eccleshotel.com) or call 027 63003.

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## Special Feature

# VALENTINES & SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

## Laughter and love

**E**laine Dempsey and Martin Needham's love story began in a pub in Bantry. Elaine, now the General Manager in The Maritime Hotel, was on a work night out; fisherman Martin, from Mayo, was in Bantry for a few months working. "He will try to tell you differently, but he chased me for my number," says Skibbereen native Elaine, laughing. Ten years later, the couple planned their next chapter, getting married in The Maritime Hotel in Bantry on June 8, 2019. They live in Caheragh with their five-year-old daughter. Elaine tells West Cork People how a broken van, lots of laughter, The Maritime and the town of Bantry are all part of their story.

**Tell us about the proposal?** Neither of us are the romantic type. We had talked about getting married but it was actually a broken-down van that led to our engagement. One day while in Limerick, Martin's van broke down. We had to wait for the mechanic and so to pass the time we went shopping and just happened to come across my

ideal ring. We took it as a sign and got engaged on the spot. Martin also got a mini engagement ring for our five-year-old daughter. Katie was as thrilled as we were.

**How did you choose your wedding venue?**

The Maritime was the perfect venue for us for loads of different reasons. I work there and so I know firsthand the thought and attention-to-detail that goes into every Maritime wedding. I knew I could trust the team to deliver the perfect day and that I would be able to completely switch off and just enjoy the celebrations. Then, with Martin's family being from Mayo, we wanted to ensure that their trip to West Cork for the wedding would be perfect; the hotel played a huge part in delivering that. I guess The Maritime and the town of Bantry is part of our story. Being able to live and work in this locality is a blessing.

**Did you have anything out-of-the-ordinary planned for the day?** We have a five-year-old daugh-



ter, and loads of nieces and nephews so we wanted our celebration to be a real family affair. We wanted it to be fun for all of our guests, from the youngest to the oldest. We did this by thinking of and including everyone in the celebrations. The food, the décor and the entertainment were all well thought out and made sure to include everyone.

**What were the most enjoyable and most stressful/challenging parts of the wedding planning**

**experience?** I enjoyed every minute of the planning and of the day. My bridesmaids kept asking what they could do, but I just took each part as it came and we found it easy to make decisions. We planned our day within nine months and it just all fell into place.

**Did you and your other half 'lock horns' on any of the wedding details?** Not at all, Martin was happy for

me to make most decisions, as it's part of my day job and I'm very organised! Our daughter also had her say and she chose our colour scheme. We didn't sweat the small details and it all easily came together.

**What was your favourite part of the day?**

There were so many amazing parts to our day; I would love to do it all again tomorrow. We did decide to take some time with our Bridal party and revisit the pub, The Quay's Bar, where we met. We spent a really enjoyable 30 minutes there, just after our photos, before arriving to the hotel. We got to eat, have a drink and just have a laugh before the next parts of the day – it was lovely.

**Do you have any funny stories from the wedding planning experience or day?**

Martin's cousin is a newly ordained priest and he kindly married us. The evening before the wedding, one of my bridesmaids mistook him for a groomsman, as he was so youthful and she thought he was good-looking, so it became a running joke on the day.

**Where did you go on honeymoon?**

We decided to wait until October. We couldn't imagine going without our daughter, so we spent a wonderful two weeks in America as a family. We had four nights in New York to explore the city that never sleeps and then another ten days in Orlando, Florida where we met every Disney Princess, as well as getting to enjoy some relaxation time.

**What are your hopes for the future?**

We were so lucky that all our family and friends celebrated our day with us and I don't think we stopped laughing all day. From start to finish, the day was just so much fun. Our hope for us is simply that the laughter never stops.

**Any advice or tips for other couples about to tie the knot?**

Everyone says it and I know it to be true...Relax! Your wedding day is what you make it. Think about what is most important to you and focus on that. There is no point in worrying, make your decisions, then leave it to the experts so that you can enjoy every minute.



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## Special Feature

## VALENTINES &amp; SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

## Eco-friendly wedding flowers

by Mags Riordan  
Bumblebee Flower Farm

You've settled on your date and are making a conscious effort to be more thoughtful about the environmental impact of your wedding. The biggest decision will be your venue including your menu choices. Next step wedding flowers, which I'll give a few tips on sourcing eco-friendly options.

It's no secret the atrocious negative impact commercial flowers have on our health and the health of our planet from the herbicides, pesticides and fungicides used in their production. Many of them banned in developed countries but still used in developing countries like Brazil, Colombia and South Africa. Then there are the air miles in transporting them thousands of miles across the world. If you are using a florist, do ask them for Fair-trade flowers; at least these will be produced in a more caring environmental manner. Please



choose your arrangements carefully and avoid single-use formaldehyde-filled floral foam – this product is leaching into our water-courses and contaminating our fish and the water we drink.

If you decide to use a farmer florist, in West Cork alone you have quite a few choices, from Ruth Fortune flowers in Glandore to Howehill Farm in Kilbrittan, who also supply certified edible flowers. If you go across the county you will find many more.

You have the power to

exact change with your buying choices for the better of the local economy and health of our planet and thus ensuring a positive future.

Choose seasonal flowers; by that I mean flowers that grow naturally in a particular season.

Trends for 2020 and beyond are for more flowing unstructured designs; these are so much easier to create with naturally grown flowers than the straight ridged commercial stems. Naturally grown flowers and herbs will fill your venue with the most wonderful fragrance and leave a lasting memory with your guests.

Regift your flowers so someone else can go on and enjoy them. Donate to a local hospital or nursing home, flowers are uplifting and if they are organically grown there are added health and emotional benefits too – they will keep on giving!

Spring flowers include scented narcissus, hyacinth, tulips, anemones, ranunculus, calendula with Iris, sweet William, allium, gyp and antirrhinum

and under cover.

Summer flowers are roses, campanula, foxgloves, dahlia, marigold, feverfew, lavender, scabious, triteleia, sweet William and alstroemeria with an incredible variety of scented herbs as fillers or focal points in their own right.

Autumn flowers are roses, dahlia, asters, chrysanthemums, alstroemeria, sweet William, amaranth, gomphrena, antirrhinum, grasses and rudbeckias.

This is not an exhaustive list but give you an idea of the wealth of flowers to choose from and many of these varieties have a full range of colours to choose from.

We grow a couple of thousand dahlias in wonderful shapes, sizes and colours.

With a little thought and planning you can have the florals of your dreams and they 'won't have cost the earth'

Let's all work together for a future we would like to live.



## Capturing a sustainable wedding

by Mags Riordan

Funny word that – 'Sustainable'. It's fast becoming the most overused, almost abused, word in our vocabulary today, with a lot of confusion surrounding its meaning; it's open to so many different interpretations depending on your point of view.

For me this was the closest quote I could find to fit my beliefs 'Avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance'.

I did some research for statistics on the carbon footprint of weddings in Ireland, but I

couldn't find a reliable source and what I did find was misleading and unreliable. There's a lot I could say on what I found but this is a short article so suffice it to say, we all know it's an area where we can have a huge impact on the future we want to create with the choices we make. If we don't start making positive environmental decisions the only sacrifice ultimately, will be our own future!

I'm sharing with you the most magical unique eco-friendly wedding shoot I was involved in last summer to give you a flavour of the incredible talent that's available on our doorstep here in West Cork.



I think the images will have far more impact than my words.

Kate Bean, one of West Cork's leading photographers, was the lady who brought us all together and captured these incredible images, I'm always amazed by the emotion Kate captures in her photographs, she seems to have this sixth sense and brings things to life through the lens; her images sustain me through the winter months when little is in bloom.

I love this dress and everything that Alice stands for, her creative vision using a host of unlikely ingredients to the beautiful bespoke bridal wear that results.

These truly are a work of art.

For brides looking for an ethically produced custom design, Alice Halliday Couture is based in Skibbereen West Cork. Alice



also styled this shoot.

Finer details in Clonakilty provided the most beautiful eco stationary, which in my opinion would make such pretty keepsakes and would almost be criminal to consign to the dustbin.

Jess from Little Green Shoot in Skibbereen created the most interesting bespoke vegan wedding cake with incredible natural food dyes to tie in with the colour brief. I love the shape and layered effect.

Celtic Fusion provided the groom's attire. Their wish is to create a new standard for the impact of fashion with their choice of fabrics, construction processes, and positive work practices. They also plant a native tree for every purchase.

Aoife De Burca Jewellery is available in West Cork Crafts.



Aoife's jewellery is beautiful, each piece is unique and thoughtfully crafted, presented and inspired by nature and the surrounding landscape.

I think this is true for all of us, nature, our natural world and working in harmony with her is the driving force. For me, everything I grow has to support nature in some way,

by providing nectar and pollen for our pollinators to feeding our invertebrates, birds and ultimately ourselves.

A picture tells a thousand words and these images speak volumes about the wonderful talent here in West Cork

Pilgrim's restaurant kindly provided the venue.

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Special Feature

VALENTINES & SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

And they lived happily ever after....



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer  
Image Consultant

From colours to flowers to accessories to materials, the bridal party's ensemble should very definitely reflect the bride. While there will be some 'traditional' guidelines, there are now NO hard and fast rules.

Let's start with the smallest person in the wedding party; there is nothing more charming than a child dressed up in wedding attire. Their clothing should be in a style and colour that coordinates with the bridesmaids' and groomsmen's attire. I suggest that you avoid anything too sophisticated for a flower girl; the simpler the

better and not too long for little feet, as you don't want them to trip over. Any headpiece or bow should be lightweight and make sure to try it out so that you know it will stay exactly where it is supposed to. The pageboy should wear a little replica outfit of the groomsmen...how sweet! Generally speaking, it is the flower girl or page boy (I hope that I'm not offending anyone so just in case, or flower boy or page girl who steals the show before the bride enters. They are supposed to and the ooh's and aah's from the wedding crowd set the tone for the arrival of the bride.

Due to the fact that wedding venues have dramatically changed in recent times, the 'little-est' person in the wedding party is often not a person at all but a four-legged companion...enter the bride and groom's dog. How lovely! I've seen some really cute little doggy wedding outfits but I'm sure that any dressmaker will oblige if you have an unusual size dog or have difficulty sourcing exactly what you want your dog to wear. Of course, a significant amount of training will have to be put in before the 'Big Day' if the privileged pooch is going to walk on his or her own and carry the rings to the groom. This is cuteness overload and mishaps can set the tone and have the entire group of onlookers in hysterics. A trail of their favourite dog biscuits works a treat every time! You didn't think that I would miss an opportunity to

write about dogs, did you?

Bridesmaid dresses need to complement the bride's gown, as they surround the bride for most of the day and in the photos for infinity. Every bride has a particular favourite colour in mind when they start hunting for bridesmaid dresses so bear in mind that skin tone and hair colour can be accentuated and flattered by choosing different complementary shades of the same colour. Also, I think that it is a wonderful thing that we are all different shapes and heights so inevitably that has to be taken into account; a 'one shape works for all' idea has to be disregarded! Backless gowns can be quite uncomfortable for those lucky enough to have 'more than a handful' in their bra and all the boob tape in the world will not hold bigger boobs in place. On the other hand, strapless dresses are lost on someone with a small bust, the shape is just wrong. A cut that is dramatic on a voluptuous girl might overwhelm a petite bridesmaid. It works better all around if the bride spends time consulting with her bridesmaids, after all if everyone is comfortable and happy in what they are wearing, it will reflect on how they hold themselves and in the widest of smiles on their face. The photos will last a lifetime and it is the best policy to ask and listen first before any bridesmaid style is chosen. Always remember 'Happy maids will be helpful maids'.

"..bear in mind that skin tone and hair colour can be accentuated and flattered by choosing different complementary shades of the same colour.... it is a wonderful thing that we are all different shapes and heights so inevitably that has to be taken into account."

If you have your heart set on a very formal wedding then most likely the groomsmen will be renting their attire. Rounding them all up might be a challenge but make sure that they try on every last bit, down to the cuff links and bowtie before they leave the shop. You would be amazed at

what can go wrong so ensure that everything fits exactly and looks exquisite – gone are the days when an ill-fitting suit or

waistcoat is acceptable. The more relaxed the wedding, then the more 'current' the suit or, for weddings in a sunny cli-

mate, a beautiful shirt and tie/bowtie will suffice. Obviously you need to lean towards lighter

cont'd on next page...

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## Special Feature

## VALENTINES &amp; SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

...cont'd from previous page

colours, lighter trouser shades and shoes in higher temperatures. Here is where having a good sense of humour can add braces, funny ones, maybe even of the bride's favourite Disney character, as a surprise! Wacky socks and inscriptions on the soles of the shoes have been done, maybe overdone, but different and personal to each wedding couple, so will always get a giggle.

Traditionally speaking, the mother-of-the-bride will choose her outfit before the groom's



mother. Then a phone call is made to inform of her choice of colour, even describing the outfit in detail so that there is no overlap. This is NOT set in stone, but it is certainly a good idea, especially for a more formal affair. If there are any additional stepmothers

involved, it is thoughtful to also include them early on and inform them about what the other mothers are wearing... something that can be easily overlooked. The GOLDEN RULE is that the mother of the bride or groom should never wear white or cream or any shade close to whatever the bride has chosen for her own dress. While it is a lovely thing to be called a 'yummy mummy', and to look good as you age, it is the bride's day so the bride is centre stage only. Try on every shape; try every shade of every colour, so that

you just know when you try on THE outfit. This does take quite a bit of footwork but will be so very worth it.

The father-of-the-bride generally walks her down the aisle and for those brides whose fathers have passed on, there is such a gaping hole that hopefully a brother can slot into. Perhaps we should also encourage the mother of the bride to consider taking up this role. The father tends to wear something very similar to the groomsmen, especially when following the more traditional affair. When it comes to

the father-of-the-groom, the rules are more pliable – it is completely up to him (or his other half)! Again, if there is a stepfather involved additionally on the bride's side, if he is not involved in the wedding party, then he is free to dress as a guest. Our family structure has changed and now there are a variety of new types of families – let us embrace all of them and good communication in advance will ensure a wonderful day out.

The role of every one of the above is to make the bride and groom's day an absolute dream,

not the other way around. Be proactive, offer help, even if it is just to collect something so that the bride or groom can focus on something else in the lead up to the big day. Remind them both how wonderful they are on a regular basis, especially in the days leading up to the big event, as nerves are at a pinnacle. Support is crucial in any team game and a wedding is a team effort, a thought to keep in your head all the way through so that the start of their 'happily ever after' is wonderful.

## Our day: A moonlit proposal

Fishmonger Shane Crowley from Skibbereen chose a spot overlooking a moonlit Glandore Harbour over Christmas 2017 to get down on one knee to propose to his love Ciara Deasy. "Shane had organised a meal in the Church Restaurant in Skibbereen but before that we went on a little detour – to my favourite spot," explains Ciara, a primary school teacher from Union Hall, who of course said yes to the very romantic proposal.

Shane had initially picked out the ring on a trip to Galway but had a change of heart and decided that Ciara should be the one to choose. The day after the proposal, the couple went to their local jewellers Seymours in Skibbereen and picked out the ring there. "Believe it or not, it was exactly the same ring Shane had picked in Galway two months previously," says Ciara.

The couple met through mutual friends at Secondary School and have been together for 15 years. They got married in St. Brigid's Church, Union Hall on Saturday, December 21, 2019 followed by a reception at Fernhill House Hotel in Clonakilty. It was a truly momentous year for Ciara, who also competed with her rowing club Myross at the World Championships in Hong Kong. The talented cox shares her and Shane's experience in planning a wedding in West Cork.

### Why did you choose that particular venue?

We had attended previous weddings at Fernhill House Hotel and we always loved it. We looked at other venues too but kept comparing them to Fernhill. The location is in close proximity to Union Hall (we wanted to spend more time with guests rather than travelling) and then there are the gardens, the staff and the food.

### Did you have anything out-of-the-ordinary planned for the day?

We had nothing planned but

our family and friends did. I am one of the coxes for Myross Rowing Club and had competed at World Championships in Hong Kong only six weeks previous. I am a member of one of the most fabulous clubs in Ireland. They organised a guard of honour with oars outside the church but what really caught us by surprise was the fact that the club decorated one of the boats to carry Shane and myself down through the village. Our photographers were amazed at this, as they had never seen it before. I had seen it done for our other cox, Carmel, a number of years ago, but I never thought they'd do it for me in December. They totally caught us by surprise!

Another surprise for us was a video from the comedian Bernard Casey from Kerry. My brother Brian in Chicago, along with the help of my other brother Eoin and my dad, organised the whole thing without our knowledge. They played it before the first dance and it really set the night up.

### What were the most enjoyable and most stressful or challenging parts of the wedding planning experience?

We really enjoyed the overall experience. We are both very relaxed so that definitely helped. The most enjoyable part was the build-up to the wedding... people calling. We have very talented people around us, which is why we organised friends and family to help out with flowers, cake,

music and make-up.

The most challenging part was co-ordinating everything wedding-related with full-time jobs and preparing for World Rowing Championships. Some of the wedding planning was done all the way from Hong Kong! There is a bit of paperwork involved and deadlines/procedures are very important. Preparation is key.

We had heard horror stories of people getting stressed before weddings relating to table plans, finalising numbers and bridezillas, to mention a few. However in my experience, the wedding planning can be as stressful as you make it.

### Did you and your other half 'lock horns' on any of the wedding details?

No. We knew exactly what we wanted. We wanted a wedding with no fuss, good food and music. We had great support around us. We are both the first from both sides of the family to get married so it was also a big deal for our parents and extended families. We were very relaxed leading up to the wedding. However, we had the rehearsal a few days beforehand and that's when the nerves kicked in. Thankfully, we got them out of our system before the big day.

### Did your other half had much input into the planning?

Shane was brilliant when it came to wedding planning. Usually I would be an extremely organised person. However,



I had just started a new job, was preparing for Hong Kong, researching/booking a honeymoon and trying to plan a wedding. Shane would remind me about the different tasks that needed to be done. He would always get me to sign off on everything and to double check we had everything done correctly. He picked all the music for the church, helped in putting the cake together, put scrolls together, decorated the church with mum (our florist) the night before. He really was hands-on.

### What was your favourite part of the day?

I loved everything about the day. From getting ready that morning to walking up the aisle to exchanging our vows to meeting everyone afterwards to getting into the boat and driving down through the village in Union Hall. My favourite part of the day was calling to my uncle Maurice. Unfortunately he was unable to attend the wedding, so we went to him. All of the grandchildren gathered around and got loads of pictures taken with him. He was delighted, as it

was such a special moment and memory we'll cherish forever.

### Do you have any funny stories from the wedding planning experience or day?

A friend and I travelled to Vietnam last Easter for a holiday. While there, I got a notion that I would like to get my bridesmaid dresses made. The two of us pretended to be my Maid of Honour and Bridesmaid. The dresses turned out beautifully but unfortunately were not suitable for my Bridesmaids!

Also the week of the wedding we got a card addressed to Niamh and Shane wishing them a happy wedding day. My sister Niamh and I are very close in age and look very similar. We both thought it was quite funny, as usually people mix us up all the time... we're well used to it.

### Where did you go on honeymoon?

We went to South Africa for two weeks and Mauritius for one week. We flew to Cape Town and spent five nights there. We travelled the Garden Route before going on a Safari and seeing the Big Five. From

there we flew to Johannesburg and Mauritius then for one week before flying home. It was amazing!

### What are your hopes for the future?

Health and happiness

### Do you have any advice or tips for other couples about to tie the knot?

Preparation is key. Get all the paperwork out of the way early on. Book the pre marriage course early and register the marriage (Venues have specific opening days/times). Remember it must be done three months before the date of the wedding.

Enjoy the build-up and precious time spent with family and friends.

Don't sweat the small stuff. Invest in a good photographer and videographer. The day goes so fast. The memories last forever.

Take a moment for yourself and your partner during the wedding.

Smile, smile and smile!

Special Feature

VALENTINES & SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

Wedding ready skin



INSIDE OUT BEAUTY

Sherna Malone

Skincare and beauty expert Sherna Malone shares her knowledge and expertise of all things beauty – from skin care do’s and don’ts to the latest products out there.

Your wedding day is one of the biggest days in your life and naturally you want to look like the most beautiful version of yourself on your special day. For me, the key to achieving wedding ready skin is preparation. If you’re a little unsure as to where to start, read on for my top beauty wedding tips to look and feel beautiful from the inside out.

HAVE A SKINCARE CONSULTATION

Every bride wants beautiful glowing skin for her special day. In the run up to the wedding, it is so important that you follow a skincare regime which will perfect your complexion and boost your natural glow so your skin looks healthy and radiant. I have clients who come to me a few weeks before their wedding looking for a quick fix and yes there are certainly treatments and products that will help improve the appearance of skin but to have it in tip top condition, ideally you should be starting to think about it a few months in advance. I always advise brides

to come in for a consultation at least six to eight months before your wedding. This is a great way to determine your skin goals and find out the best way to optimise your skincare in the run up to the big day.

SCHEDULE SOME FACIALS

Regular facials make a big difference to your skin’s texture and the better prepared your skin is, the more flawless your makeup will look on the day and the longer it will last. Schedule a monthly treatment (aim for three) that will tackle your skin concerns along with improving the tone and texture of your skin. A facial is also a great opportunity to see what your skin needs or what it’s lacking. Some brides who have blemish prone skin, will benefit from a course of pore clarifying treatments and for many brides who come to see me, it’s all about achieving the glow! In this instance a course of Exuviance OptiLight Brightening Peels will deliver great results. And in the midst of all the wedding planning, facials are a welcome treat and a time for some self-care, which we all know the importance of.

BRIGHTEN UP

Get your wedding glow on with some Vitamin C. Considered the gold standard of skin-brightening, Vitamin C will help with overall dullness, dark spots, pigmentation and uneven skin tone. Also known as ascorbic acid, Vitamin C interferes with the development of pigmentation, so with regular application and time it can really help the complexion, it is also a powerful antioxidant, protecting the skin from environmental aggressors and helps to promote the production of collagen and elastin, which helps to prevent premature aging of the

skin. The good news is that Vitamin C is incredibly easy to integrate into your skincare regime and suitable for all skin types. Try NeoStrata Enlighten Illuminating Serum, The Inkey List Vitamin C Serum or Vichy Liftactiv Vitamin C Brightening Skin Corrector.

TRY FACIAL MASSAGE

This is something I do on a regular basis and it’s a great way to achieve healthier more luminous skin. Massaging your face just a few times a week will stimulate your skin, wake it up and get your blood flow going which stops it being lethargic and kick-starts your fibroblasts to produce more collagen. Using your favourite facial oil, massage into your face using upward strokes. Even better, use a facial massage tool, jade rollers and gua sha are both popular and help release lymphatic drainage and stimulate the skin. One of my favourite tools is Hayo’u Beauty Restorer Face Massage Tool available from Currentbody.com €47. The results of a good facial massage are a reduction in puffiness, uplift in the firmness of the skin, a release of any tension in the face and that covetable healthy glow.

CATCH SOME ZZZS

Beauty sleep isn’t called beauty sleep for nothing. During sleep, the body goes into ‘repair’ mode and in the deepest stages of sleep will produce the most growth hormone, which aids in cell and tissue repair and it also makes new collagen, keeping skin strong and elastic. In order to make the best use of your beauty sleep, as early as an hour before you go to bed, and no later than fifteen minutes before you sleep, try and create a wind-down routine. Switch off the emails, dim the lights and relax. Along with reducing

your caffeine intake, try having a long warm bath or shower before bedtime. If you’re still finding it difficult to drift off to sleep, try a sleep aid like ‘This Works Deep Sleep Pillow Spray’, which calms both the mind and body and literally soothes you to sleep with its beautiful blend of lavender, vetivert and camomile.

EAT HEALTHIER

Research shows that a diet loaded with sugars, processed foods, saturated animal fats and too much alcohol are pro-ageing for your body and your skin. A poor diet can even make acne-prone skin worse, because so many foods that aren’t good for us cause inflammation. While the damage may not show up initially, in the long run, eating an unhealthy diet can make your skin suffer. For a luminous glow, look to incorporate foods in your diet that are rich in high-quality protein, antioxidants, omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids. Include colourful fruits and vegetables, whole grains and other healthy fats, such as nuts, seeds and olive oil. And remember to keep hydrated and drink six to eight glasses of water per day. This is not only important for your overall health, but also helps to improve the look and feel of your skin. If you find it difficult to drink water, try the ‘Plant Nanny App’ to keep to your daily target.

SMILE!

Not so much skin-related but most brides-to-be want a brighter whiter smile for their wedding. Today there is a vast array of toothpastes that have whitening ingredients in them, but for faster results, choose a special whitening one. I use Irish brand ‘Spotlight Teeth Whitening Paste’; they also have ‘Teeth White Strips’, which are a very safe and easy

way to whiten teeth at home. If you do feel like a splurge, you can also visit your dentist’s surgery to have your teeth professionally whitened, just don’t go overboard, as if it looks too artificial, it might just be your teeth that take centre stage!

For brides-to-be, if you would like to have a bridal beauty consultation or facial treatment with me, email hello@shernamalone.ie you can also follow me on Instagram and Facebook @shernamalone.ie www.shernamalone.ie.

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## Special Feature

## VALENTINES &amp; SPRING/SUMMER WEDDINGS

## A truffalicious hen with champagne

Get your favourite friends together to sip champagne whilst designing your own flavours for decadent truffles at a unique hen workshop in Clonakilty. Allison Roberts of Exploding Tree shares her expertise with groups during this brilliantly fun, relaxed and very hands-on workshop that is perfect for big birthdays and hens!

Shape, dip and drizzle your chocolates by hand and taste your way from bean to bar whilst learning all about the ancient, traditional craft of the chocolatier. Each guest will have plenty to nibble on and a box of truffles to take home.

This workshop is approx two-hours in length and, for larger groups, usually takes place in either O'Donovans Hotel or using the kitchen of Dunowen House. Minimum group size is 8 people, €35 per person (discounts for groups over 15 hens.)



Allison is hosting special Valentines workshops on both February 14 and 15 so, if you fancy a different (and delicious) kind of date with your belle or beau, book your places online at [www.explodingtree.com/events](http://www.explodingtree.com/events).

"A really great experience. Not only is Allison an expert in all things chocolate, she really cares about the ethical and environmental aspects of her business ... But most importantly, her chocolate tastes amazing! If you would like to taste real chocolate that is made with care and love, you are in for a real treat!" Aoife.



## Sixty-nine years of wedded bliss for couple who met in Clonakilty

Both 96-years-young, Patricia and James Skinner celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary on January 24.

Born in 1923, Patricia grew up in Clonakilty, where her parents owned Magner's Butcher Shop on Pearse Street, Clonakilty (in the premises which is now ClonTackle).

Originally from Mitchelstown, James was working in Houlihan's Bakery in Clonakilty when he met Patricia. The couple, who married in 1951 before moving to Mitchelstown, went on to have six children.

Mrs Skinner remembers her family's butcher shop well and the slaughter house behind it, which is now apartments on McCurtain Hill. However she would love to reminisce over old photographs of Magner's. If any readers have such photos, Mrs Skinner's daughter-in-law Jackie would be grateful to receive an email on [jacqueline.cork@gmail.com](mailto:jacqueline.cork@gmail.com) or phone 087 7742795.



Patricia and James Skinner on their wedding day in 1951 and present day (above left).

## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## Holistic recovery from anxiety

Anxiety is the body and mind's natural reaction to danger and stress. It is activated by the sympathetic nervous system and often called the fight or flight response. Anxiety is experienced physically and emotionally and affects our thoughts and behaviours. Its main job is to keep us safe and help us to react quickly and intuitively so we avoid or get away from a dangerous situation by running

or fighting if we have to. When this job is done the parasympathetic system should naturally reset the body back to the rest and digest mode.

Anxiety affects adults, teens and children; it can be triggered by chronic stress or a trauma including bullying and childbirth and becomes a problem when the sympathetic fight or flight response remains alert.

Common physical sensa-

tions that people report are palpitations, nausea, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, overwhelming feelings of fear and worry causing restlessness. Symptoms can become out of proportion to the actual danger or stress of any situation causing irrational thoughts, behaviours or panic attacks.

In response to the flight or fight response, the adrenal glands are prompted to produce cortisol, which is an

important hormone to help us deal with inflammation (it is also the hormone that works with melatonin to regulate proper sleep patterns). When the adrenals become over-worked they produce more and more cortisol requiring more and more nutrients such as vitamin C and B. Depletion of your nutritional reserves or needing more than your diet or body can provide can lead to a wide variety of health concerns and an increased time to recover from illness, injury or trauma.

Anxiety when untreated can continue to increase in severity and potentially cause a nervous breakdown in extreme cases. Because of the accumulative effect that anxiety has on mental and physical health, a better outcome can be achieved when a holistic approach is taken.

Holistic avenues that should be considered are:

**Remove Stress** – Uncertainty and too much stress makes anxiety worst. Reducing or removing current stresses and learning how to manage future stress to a motivational level helps to promote better mental and physical health.



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist  
& Mind coach

**Resolve any past trauma and reset the sympathetic response** – How we initially respond to danger or threat even at an early age becomes our default response, so identifying and resolving the root cause of the anxiety, plus reprogramming ourselves to deal with it differently in the future is key.

**Bin the junk food** – Junk food draws on your nutritional reserves. Sugar and processed carbs are linked to mood swings and anxiety. Fresh vegetables cooked or raw, good quality meat/eggs and essential fats will improve your mood. Eat breakfast, lunch and

dinner, as skipping meals leads to cravings and an increase in symptoms.

**Supplements** – When nutritional reserves are depleted, it is difficult to consume enough nutrition from food to rebuild nutritional stores. Natural whole food supplements are best. Taking omega 3 daily will help to relieve anxiety and promote brain health.

**Exercise** – Go out and walk in nature. When you start do what you can, then build up gradually to 40-60 minutes daily.

**Get quality sleep** – Blue light from electrical devices effect production of the body's sleep hormone melatonin. Turning off electrical devices an hour before bed and reading a book will help to create a positive sleep environment

If you would like to recover from Trauma, Anxiety or Stress Amanda Roe uses a range of holistic therapies to help clients improve their mental, physical and emotional health. For more information or to book a session call/text 087 633 1898 or email [amanda@marketstclinic.com](mailto:amanda@marketstclinic.com)

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people Health & Lifestyle

# In your head



**Noreen Coomey** (BA(Hons) PGDip MI-ACP) is a coach and psychotherapist practising in West Cork and Ballincollig. She also provides mental health talks and workshops to schools, clubs and workplaces.

Though we make ourselves miserable with our unhelpful thinking, we are often reluctant to notice it, examine it and take steps to change it. We give our thoughts

power by engaging in them as if they are factual and correct. When we believe our irrational thinking (*Ellis, 1994*) we produce two common emotions – guilt from rumination/regret over the past and anxiety from catastrophising/worry about the future. In each of these states we live in our heads rather than directly experiencing the world – we are ‘lost in our thoughts’. Living in the future or the past prevents us from taking intentional growth steps.

When our thinking is distorted (*Beck 1976, Ellis 1994*) our performance is also affected, with thoughts (cognition) and emotions having an impact on judgements and consequent behaviour. Catastrophising is also known as Murphy’s Law – ‘Anything that can go wrong will go wrong!’ Fifty per cent of my clients suffer from anxiety – their paralysing question being – ‘what if something bad happens and I cannot cope?’ The underlying thinking here is that they don’t trust themselves or their capacity to manage change.

Ellis describes the three basic

‘Musts’, which an individual creates – demands on self, others and the world around him, which can lead to anxiety in self, anger towards others and frustration with the world. He designed the ABC(DE) model now widely used to provide insight into the distorted thinking and behaviour. The attention we give to unproductive thoughts makes them real – we allow them shape our reality by believing and acting upon them. It’s all in our heads!

Before we can change what we are thinking we need to pay attention to what we are thinking. Separating the thoughts from the reality of what we know helps build resilience in coping with the uncertainty and impermanence of the world. Using reasoning and reality-testing we go to an uninhabited neutral zone to dismantle, defuse and make sense of our negative thoughts. This is like a trip into no-man’s-land – a place of uncertainty and fear, full of danger, barbed wire and unexploded landmines and to quote one client “you didn’t know where the bullets were

coming from!”

My clients are always seeking more control and direction over their lives. I believe that they have the inner expertise, experience and potential to find the way forward and to decide the content, theme and goal of the coaching conversation since they are the experts on themselves. At all times I provide a logical, structured framework and narrative space for the work. Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC) provides practical techniques to change behaviour, to achieve insight and improve rational decision-making. We use problem-solving, solution-focused strategies and goal-directed activity to help discover your potential to improve your personal or workplace performance.

As a psychotherapist, I mainly deal with issues of anxiety, stress, relationship problems, workplace pressures and health concerns. I am an accredited member of IACP and abide by their code of ethics in my work. All information and booking on [noreencoomey.com](http://noreencoomey.com).

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# Treating man’s best friend with Herbal Medicine

**Jacqueline Kilbryde** has been a practicing medical herbalist for 28 years and lives in West Cork. She is a member of NIMH and the IRCMH. Some years after qualifying as a western herbalist, Jacqueline did a study of Chinese herbal medicine with a months’ clinical training in Nanjing, China, and she incorporates the principles of TCM in her practice.



Our furry friends often need our help in assisting them to be well. They are so much a part of the family that we tend to nurture our pets as we would our children, and what better way to treat them than as naturally as possible than with herbal medicine.

Since prevention is better than cure, it is important that their diet is nutritious and free of additives and they get plenty of exercise, fresh air and love. The digestive system of dogs and horses in particular, can utilise herbs in the same manner as humans, since their metabolism is similar.

External parasites are bothersome and can cause secondary infection externally, due to the irritation to the animal’s skin from scratching. Internal para-

site infestation can undermine health by deriving the animal of nutrients. This often results in a dry coat, weeping, dull eyes, and an inability to gain weight. The gut microbiome may also be compromised. You know a worming mix has been successful by the glossiness of the coat and the brightness of the eyes that ensues after worming.

Most of the herbs used for worming and de-fleaing are bitter, parasitides, and include Wormwood, Tansy, Feverfew, Rue and Aloe Vera to name a few. Some of the bitter anthraquinone, yellow curled dock and rhubarb root, can also be added to encourage the expulsion of the parasites. Including demulcent herbs such as Marshmallow root adds a softening, sweet and soothing effect to the strong bitters.

An excellent prescription of herbs that can be used for parasite infections in the gut is a combination of these herbs: Lemon grass (*Cymbopogon*

*citrus*) - 30g; Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthum*) - 30g; Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) - 30g; Garlic (*Allium sativum*) - 25g.

This mixture is very effective for worms, and other herbs mentioned earlier may also be used. I substituted Lemon Verbena (*Aloysia citrodora*) for lemon grass, because it is easier to grow and it is appreciably anti-parasitic. I added Marshmallow root to the mix (30g). The fresh/dried herbs are macerated together in 40 per cent vodka and left for three to four weeks. Afterwards, the tincture is strained, bottled and labelled.

To administer the tincture, mix a proportion of it with olive oil/suitable vegetable oil (two parts oil to one part tincture). This is then poured into capsules and placed in the pet’s food or given manually in butter. The latter works very well! A pet may tolerate the tincture being mixed into their food. Alternatively, the herbs may

be dried and powdered, then combined and put into capsules. Dosage is two capsules for two days, and the dose is repeated two weeks later to allow for eggs hatching. The number of capsules given depends on the size and weight of the pet. As a rule of thumb, give one capsule for cats each of the two days and three for larger dogs. Treatment takes place six months apart, but this can be adjusted to every three months if parasites build up.

Volatile oil-rich herbs such as peppermint and lavender are repugnant to fleas. They also dislike Tansy, Thyme, Lemon-grass and Citronella.

To make an effective flea mix, I combine the following dried powdered herbs: Wormwood - 30g; Southernwood - 30g; Lavender - 25g; Peppermint - 25g; Rue - 15g.

The powder is rubbed into the pet’s fur, paying attention to areas that fleas inhabit more. Alternatively, the herbal mix can be made into an infusion, steeping the dried or powdered herbs in hot water for an hour. The infusion is strained and the retained fluid put into a pump spray bottle and applied to the animal’s coat. This can be repeated daily for a few days.

For more information or to purchase a tincture email Jacqueline on [jackiedahe@hotmail.com](mailto:jackiedahe@hotmail.com).

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## ASTROLOGY

Kate Arbon

Kate Arbon is an astrologer, writer and spiritual teacher. Living in West Cork for over 20 years she gives personal consultations locally and internationally using traditional natal and Horary astrology.  
email: astro@katearbon.com  
www.katearbon.com

# February Sun Signs

February is a mixed month of several Astrological dynamics pulling in different directions. So when you feel a bit stretched, compromised or concerned that you can't plot a clear course of action, don't be surprised.

If you want this to be a productive few weeks then a good approach would be to focus on 'going with the flow'. If you have wanted to start practicing mindfulness techniques or taking up a meditation course this would be a perfect time. The frustration comes when you try to push things into places that they won't fit, or expect tight schedules to go like clockwork.

Getting things done and achieving a sense of fulfillment will be less stressful if you allow plenty of room for options and alternative routes, as things unfold at their own pace and according to an unknown plan

We start the month with Mer-

cury entering the sign of Pisces on February 3. It joins Neptune in this sign, which is strongly inclined to an otherworldly focus and a natural chaos as the norm. Pisces wants to merge and blend with an unseen rhythm and is best suited to following the heightened intuition and sensitivity that are typical with this water sign. Neptune is happily in tune with the sign Pisces and will be transiting here until 2025. Our mind, speech and communication, Mercury's business, can become diffused and dreamy. It can also bring confusion and a tendency to delusions or deceptive thoughts. So this month it may be harder to recognise what's true and what is pure wishful thinking or a negative imagination. It may also become apparent that the so-called 'truth' can be very subjective and not as reliable, as some people would have you believe. So care is needed when

adhering to hard facts, as they may be softer and more malleable than you thought.

Mercury going retrograde in Pisces this month is only going to add to the feeling that we aren't quite in control. Just before Mercury enters Pisces it reaches the degree in Aquarius that it will return to during this coming retrograde period, so technically we are already in the shadow of this phase. The station, or point where the planet appears to start moving backward in on February 17 and it starts forwards again on March 10 but it will take up to March 30 to move into new territory. So be aware that whatever is going on for you during the first few days this month may well come up again for review before early March. This is especially the case where you thought you had something in agreement or you knew where you stood, or that things were fully set and ready

to go forward to suit your own ideas or desires.

If you can navigate the retrograde then there is a real chance to make progress. Mars, the planet of physical drive and energy, moves into steadfast and productive Capricorn on the 16th and joins the other planets in a Capricorn line up until the end of March. Again there can be frustrations as Mars in an earth sign gets slowed down, but this is an advantage if you need to take time to plan carefully or get a good longterm strategy worked out. Just be aware that the progress, for the next few weeks, may be in the approach, rather than the execution of your ideas.

Another transit to add to the complexity of February is Venus, the social and inclusive planet moves into independent and assertive Aries, on the 7th. So there can be less compromise and more confrontation

when it comes to our relationships and social connections. This can be positive or negative and depends on how you are situated. There may be a need to address whatever is no longer working well and make changes even if that doesn't suit both parties initially. This planet placement gives the will to challenge a stuck or unsatisfactory arrangement. This can be an inward and personal experience or it may involve you and another. Either way, the end result is better harmony and more truthful relationships, but only when the required action has taken place and the new dynamic integrated, and that may not happen until this month has passed.

**The February Full Moon is at 20° Leo on the 9th at 7.33am with the New Moon at 5° Pisces on the 23rd at 3.31pm**



**Aries:** Natural ease are the keywords for you this Full Moon and it is time to loosen up and have some fun, especially with close friends and children. If you get into the party mood, you will very likely be in good company, as this is a general time of celebration for all. Passion and intensity, on any topic you choose, can run rampant and your enthusiasm overflows. You have a strong emotional need for some romantic encounters but you do know how to nurture and maintain the romance in an existing relationship too. So take the plunge and enjoy!

Passion and intensity, on any topic you choose, can run rampant and your enthusiasm overflows. You have a strong emotional need for some romantic encounters but you do know how to nurture and maintain the romance in an existing relationship too. So take the plunge and enjoy!



**Taurus:** This Full Moon you are especially sensitive to the moods of any others who share your personal space. Although you will be strongly motivated to create a caring and secure environment around you, a crowd can be claustrophobic, you can get on each other's nerves. This is a time to acknowledge how the comfortable and familiar supports you. You might find you need to spend a lot of time at home. Draw on it as a source of strength as you prepare to achieve some great things out in the world.

other's nerves. This is a time to acknowledge how the comfortable and familiar supports you. You might find you need to spend a lot of time at home. Draw on it as a source of strength as you prepare to achieve some great things out in the world.



**Gemini:** You may experience strong differences of opinion with someone you have to deal with every day during this Full Moon. When you argue your case you are easily swayed by irrational arguments and emotions. Could it be that everybody is trying to get their message through but no one is listening? Try not to get distracted whilst you tie up important loose ends and meet deadlines. You need to keep some time for a new project or mental challenge. You could be making plans for travelling or starting a new class or training programme.

get their message through but no one is listening? Try not to get distracted whilst you tie up important loose ends and meet deadlines. You need to keep some time for a new project or mental challenge. You could be making plans for travelling or starting a new class or training programme.



**Cancer:** This Full Moon will find you focusing on your personal resources and adjusting to economic fluctuations. You can be a very kind and giving person but you also need to feel secure. Being a little more concerned with your financial status now is probably a good thing although some people may view you as unusually materialistic and possessive. This is a time to cash in on some of your hard earned investments and name your price for your efforts. Be confident in your skills and abilities and turn them to good use now as others will notice and reward you later.

is probably a good thing although some people may view you as unusually materialistic and possessive. This is a time to cash in on some of your hard earned investments and name your price for your efforts. Be confident in your skills and abilities and turn them to good use now as others will notice and reward you later.



**Leo:** The emphasis is not so much on what you've done, but rather who you are. This Full Moon is the right time to let your personality truly shine. You instinctively know how important feelings are for personal development and you have a powerful impact on your surroundings through your moods. You may be seen as over-emotional or sentimental, but you know how to provide a truly nurturing environment for others to grow and you're motivated to show how much concern and care you have for others.

as over-emotional or sentimental, but you know how to provide a truly nurturing environment for others to grow and you're motivated to show how much concern and care you have for others.



**Virgo:** Allow yourself to withdraw from the world and focus on your inner feelings. During this Full Moon you are extremely sensitive and might want to spend a lot of time where other people have difficulty getting in contact with you. Ideally create a place of your own which is sacred to you, and where you can be alone. In this private sphere or retreat. Try to work more consciously with your imagination through creative work or meditative practice for a few days.

of your own which is sacred to you, and where you can be alone. In this private sphere or retreat. Try to work more consciously with your imagination through creative work or meditative practice for a few days.



**Libra:** You have forged strong bonds with your friends and you are extremely sensitive to how they treat you over the Full Moon. You are easily hurt if they let you down in any way, so ensure that you spend time only with people that support you. Disconnect from the daily grind and share fine food, pleasant company and tales of mutual adventures. Give yourself the chance to remember that the good life is about feelings and friendship not money or possessions.

money or possessions.



**Scorpio:** You may feel that your role is primarily to live up to family or social expectations over the Full Moon. In your past a lot of your unconscious motivation has been aimed at living up to other people's expectations. Now is the time to reach out for what you want for yourself and stand in the spotlight whilst acting the part of your unique self in all your glory. Take time out during these few days to notice your contribution to other people's lives.

Take time out during these few days to notice your contribution to other people's lives.



**Sagittarius:** Think big, stretch the imagination, push the envelope of your beliefs and feelings this Full Moon. Holding on to a strong belief that is solid and true for you demands your attention now. During these few days your interest in philosophical and spiritual areas is heightened. Use the time to expand your inner window on the world and break new ground. The heady feeling of suddenly having put it all together can have you wondering now what to do with it all, but that will take care of itself down the line.

Use the time to expand your inner window on the world and break new ground. The heady feeling of suddenly having put it all together can have you wondering now what to do with it all, but that will take care of itself down the line.



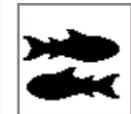
**Capricorn:** Experiences over this Full Moon will confirm that you must not depend on other people to provide emotional security for you. Your relationships will benefit from greater depth and understanding. Your new knowledge will be of great help to everyone you contact on an intimate level. You no longer need to rely on certain items or possessions as you move on. Clear off the cobwebs and throw out those useless things you've been hoarding, the freedom will do you good.

to everyone you contact on an intimate level. You no longer need to rely on certain items or possessions as you move on. Clear off the cobwebs and throw out those useless things you've been hoarding, the freedom will do you good.



**Aquarius:** You have difficulty distinguishing between what you feel and what those closest to you feel during this Full Moon. You have got a little too close and caught up with other people recently. You need to stand back. Allow yourself to fully connect with others but imagining they are reacting to something you did or said is not helping anyone. The support and equality you sense when you get some distance will produce welcome rewards later.

when you get some distance will produce welcome rewards later.



**Pisces:** You may waste energy on menial tasks and get distracted from the broader visions in your life during this Full Moon. You are excellent at tuning in to the physical needs of others and generally happy to take on a lot of tasks – both in your career and around the house. If you are not careful however, other people will take advantage of you. Focus on getting things together for yourself. Once you've put on the finishing touches, you'll be able to stand back and take pride in your accomplishments.

able to stand back and take pride in your accomplishments.

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## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## Seven Essentials for 100 per cent Health workshop



## HEALTH

Hannah Dare  
Organico Bantry

After the huge success of Patrick Holford's Talk in Bantry last Autumn we decided to invite him back again, but this time for a full day's workshop, which we are hosting on March 29 in Organico Cafe.

In our business, it can be exhausting having to deal with so many new, often faddy, diets and supplements. We are constantly asked for the latest version of, say, omega 3, or the latest probiotic – and sometimes there is merit in a

new development, but often, you find that it's just marketing spin. The Internet has a lot to answer for! So it's reassuring to find someone to work with who bases his advice on science and research, rather than trends. And who gives practical advice that anyone can follow, which is safe, reasonable and grounded in reality.

We are very excited to be able to offer an entire day's workshop this time – it will give us all a chance to really take in what we need to change and to ask questions, as well as come away with a personalised health plan.

The workshop is called the Seven Essentials for 100 per cent Health, and it's based on an on-going survey of over 100,000 people, studying what those with the best health have in common.

Through surveying hundreds of thousands of people, Patrick has found that there are seven fundamental processes in the body that, when out of balance, often drive disease.

The first is digestion. In the survey only 14 per cent of people enjoy good digestive

health. Eight-one per cent of people have less than one bowel movement a day. If you get bloated after eating, Patrick suggests you are probably eating something you're intolerant to (wheat and milk are the most common culprits) or not digesting properly.

The next is keeping your blood sugar level even and avoiding sugar. In the survey, 80 per cent of people say they often have low energy. Forty-two per cent of people wake up tired. The key to keeping your energy level high, and losing weight and controlling sugar cravings is to eat a low glycemic load (GL) diet. In his workshop, Patrick will show us what this means. This not only prevents but also reverses diabetes.

In the 100 per cent health survey he found that 82 per cent of people become quickly impatient. Sixty-four per cent become anxious or tense easily and 32 per cent have poor memory. Your ability to stay sharp, with a good mood and minimal risk of disease depends on getting enough B vitamins, vital for a process

called methylation. A simple homocysteine blood test can determine whether you have healthy methylation. If high, this increases risk for dementia and depression.

Patrick also found that people who eat oily fish three or more times per week, or nuts or seeds three times a day are 60 per cent more likely to have optimum health than those who do not. Essential fats from oily fish and seeds keeps your mind and body well oiled, reducing risk for heart disease, halving joint pain, improving mood and banishing dry skin.

Getting enough antioxidants from fresh vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices, drinking enough water are two other health essentials. The seventh essential he calls the 'communication network'. 'Inflammation, aches and pains, but also cancer, is a breakdown in the body's communication network,' he says.

"I am convinced that these fundamental underlying processes are driving people's major and minor health issues. In this workshop we work out which are out of balance they

**Workshop with PATRICK HOLDFORD**  
Sunday 29 March, 9.30am-5.30pm  
Organico Cafe, Bantry  
**7 Essentials for 100% Health lunch, coffee, healthy treats & handouts**

Tickets: €100\* from Organico Shop/Eventbrite \*fees apply online

leave with a precise action plan to reverse disease and regain health. Staying healthy is easy when you know what counts. As Marcel Proust said "The act of discovery is not in finding new lands but seeing with new eyes." That's what the Seven Essential of 100 per cent Healthy People workshop is all about."

Patrick will lead The Seven Essentials Workshop in Organi-

co Cafe this March 29, which is a Sunday, between 9.30am and 5.30pm. Ticket price includes a delicious lunch, healthy treats and coffee, as well as notes from the workshop. Tickets are limited, booking available through Organico (in person or call 02751391) or through Eventbrite/Facebook (there is an extra charge for online bookings).

## My perspective on the vital role of Bantry Hospital in West Cork



## DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Dr Jeff Featherstone

Dr Featherstone is a highly experienced medic and award-winning doctor who works in a busy GP practice in West Cork, as well as at Mercy University Hospital and Cork University Hospital, as an A&E doctor.

January has come and gone and I just love to hear the words "There is a fine stretch to the day". I seem to have just gotten home from the Christmas party and it's February already! It was quite a party!

You may have been as panicked as I was by headlines

in the papers in January about the suspected downgrading of Bantry Hospital. The details were sketchy...a worrying email had been circulated to GPs that a downgrade was on the cards. Bantry would be closed to admissions after 5pm!

As a result, the GPs were out in force on Friday, January 16 in Dunmanway to try and establish what was planned.

A link had been made between the up-skilling of GPs, providing them with full emergency kits as used by advanced paramedics, and the downgrading of Bantry!

There was a record turn out of GPs; we listened to a presentation of how to equip and deal with life-threatening emergencies by Dr Michael Power from Dublin, the Clinical Lead in Critical Care. Prof Gerard Bury, the Director of University College Centre for Emergency Response supported his presentation and endorsed all that he had to say.

I think it is fair to say that every GP would and does co-operate with the Acute Response Teams like the Ambulance Service, Advanced Paramedics, first responders, Dr Jason and so on, if

practical.

Our eminent speakers denied any link, or conspiracy between the up-skilling and equipping of GPs and closing of Bantry after 5pm.

Were the GPs reassured? Not totally...no smoke without fire springs to mind!

I went home and checked my emergency bag; there are new treatments available to GPs for those rare emergencies. My bag takes up most of the boot now and is still short of items recommended by Dr Power and, in fairness, I really also need a nurse in the boot as well, to assist and support me! As I said, there are practical difficulties...

I was proud to hear passionate GPs from isolated areas around the Beara Peninsula describe how they had responded last year to emergencies, kept patients going with expert but limited care while an ambulance took over an hour to reach them. They thanked God when it arrived, and Bantry was there later to save a life. Moving stuff from the 'real world'!

You can imagine the scene after such an emergency when a GP gets back to the Surgery to angry patients who may

have waited hours in the waiting rooms.

Anyway, the meeting finished late, it was good to see all the consultants from Bantry, and I for one will chain myself to the railings outside Bantry if any attempt is made to downgrade such a wonderful hospital.

Imagine the scene – I have been there when I worked at Bantry – a patient rushes into Bantry, as they do, they are desperate, they just see Hospital and know help is there. A child is held in mum's arms; the child has been crushed by a cow that has just calved. What does a doctor do if it is after 5pm? Some of our leaders living in their Ivory Towers would recommend telling them to drive 90 minutes to Cork and do nothing. You must be joking. By the way, the little girl was stabilised in the HDU, and the patient transferred to CUH with the anaesthetist in attendance as soon as possible. She survived.

The 'golden hour' between injury and critical care is the mantra tripped out by A&E doctors. It takes 90 minutes on a good day to reach CUH from the Beara and environs. Conclusion – tell our HSE!

## Support grows in West Cork for cancer patients and their families

"Giving the tools and the supports to help people live well during and after cancer is key for both the patient and the family member," says Catriona O'Mahony, Cork ARC's Community Cancer Support Co-ordinator. Catriona leads up the services at Cork ARC's centre in Bantry, which was established in 2015.

Cork ARC in Bantry continues to be a place of support, confidentiality and tranquillity for its visitors, who may be affected by cancer in any way, and be at any stage of their cancer journey. At Cork ARC, an unconditional welcome awaits their visitors – no appointment is needed, visitors are welcome to drop in or telephone for support, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A team of trained volunteer listeners are in place to support visitors, with information, a listening ear, and a safe, confidential space.

New services for Cork ARC in Bantry this Spring will include the CLIMB® Programme (Children's Lives Include Moments of Bravery), as well as a Look Good Feel Good workshop. CLIMB is a six

week programme designed to support children between the ages of six to 11 whose parents or a significant other adult have a cancer diagnosis. The aim of the CLIMB Programme is to build a child's strengths and to enhance their abilities to cope with their feelings when cancer happens to their Mom or Dad. CLIMB is based on mental health promotion. Through fun, art and play, children learn about cancer and express their feelings about it.

Cork ARC's Breast Cancer Nurse Counsellor, Fiona Moriarty, will return to Bantry for one-to-one appointments on Tuesday, February 25 and Tuesday, April 28.

As always, services are offered free of charge to cancer patients, their families and carers.

To enquire about a programme or service or to avail of support, free of charge, please contact Cork ARC in Bantry on 027 53891 / 083 198 8580 / westcork@corkcancer-support.ie, or drop in to Cork ARC Cancer Support House at 'The Bungalow', Goureebeg near Bantry, P75 PK25 (open Tuesdays and Thursdays).

## people Health & Lifestyle

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## CNM gave me the chance to be an entrepreneur



Monika Mateja,  
CNM Vegan Natural  
Chef Graduate

What attracted me to CNM was that I could study during weekends while still having

my full-time job. I read other student stories, looked at the curriculum which, aside from the cooking skills, has very good naturopathic content and internship hours.

The course was professional and fun. I loved the practical approach to learning about nutrition and cooking in the CNM Natural Chef kitchens. The knowledgeable teachers showed us what is possible with vegan food. We cooked delicious recipes and what I learnt was invaluable.

I used to work in Engineering and Construction Company. After 14 years in the corporate world I hit burnout and was signed off with mild depression. My Type 1 diabetes was out of control, I put on weight, demand for insulin increased



and I was recommended statins for my cholesterol levels. I was inspired to look into natural therapies in 2017 and I switched to a plant-based diet. I can now manage stress much better, I lost over one stone, my skin cleared, I do not have to take that much insulin and my cholesterol levels have gone down.

Since doing the course I started my own business. I always wanted to be an entrepreneur and studying at CNM gave me that chance. I've trained as a Health Coach and now run cooking workshops and supper clubs at my house, as well as having private clients who I guide to a plant-based diet.

I have never felt fitter and healthier and I love my healthier version of me.

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**CNM**  
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## Enterprise Awareness Event at West Cork Campus



Joan Browne (Home & Away Care), Orla Clancy (Senior Corporate Communications Manager, Spearline), Barry Looney (West Cork Hotel), Lisa Whelton (Home & Away Care), Máire O'Sullivan (Coordinator) at the Enterprise Event at the West Cork Campus

The West Cork Campus in Skibbereen recently hosted an Enterprise Awareness Event for its students, where local entrepreneurs were invited to give presentations about the origins

of their successful businesses and to share some of their personal experiences and tips. The students were enlightened by the heartening stories of how each individual business was developed and gained insight

for their own future plans.

The entrepreneurs who gave up time from their busy schedules to take part were: Alan Kingston (Glenilen Farm), John O'Connell (West Cork Distillers), Séan Cahalane



From left: Máire O'Sullivan (Coordinator), Rosaleen O'Shea (Horticulture student), Bill Chase (Deelish Garden Centre) Ita Murphy (Startup & Entrepreneur Manager, Ludgate Hub), April Danann (Nature Rebel Clinic & Fermented Herbal Products), Alan Draper & Amy McCarthy (Horticulture students) & Michael Burke (Coordinator of QQI Level 5 Horticulture) at the Enterprise Event at the West Cork Campus.

(Union Hall Smoked Fish), Ita Murphy (The Ludgate Hub), April Danann (Nature Rebel – Clinic and Fermented Herbal Products), Bill Chase (Deelish Garden Centre), Donagh Carey (Donagh Carey Artist), Etain Hickey (Etain Hickey Crafts), Alison Ospina (Green Wood Chairs), Barry Looney (West

Cork Hotel), Joan Browne (Home and Away Care) and Orla Clancy (Spearline).

Students benefitted from insights into the various sectors of employment in West Cork. A common business tip highlighted on the day was the need to network to gather valuable business contacts.

It was also reiterated that the support of the Local Enterprise Office can prove invaluable in the foundation and development of a business. Students were encouraged to never give up on their dreams and to embrace change and keep their options open.

people Health & Lifestyle

# TMJ and tinnitus



**Eoin Roe**  
Chiropractic

Last month I wrote an article about headaches, and particularly those related to neck pain (cervicogenic headaches). There is another condition that is closely related to headaches and whilst it may not cause them, there is evidence that it can contribute to the severity and frequency of headaches, namely TMJ dysfunction (Temporo-mandibular Joint); in plain English – jaw

problems.

Dysfunction of the jaw, either in the joints or the muscles around them, is often associated with grinding the teeth, clicking in the jaw when chewing, pain when chewing and an inability to open the mouth wide enough.

The structure of the jaw is quite complex; the lower jaw-bone (mandibular) effectively hangs from the Maxilla. Four different muscles connect to the lower jaw to facilitate its movement. These muscles are the masseter, the temporalis, the medial pterygoid, and the lateral pterygoid. Each of these muscles occurs in pairs, with one of each muscle appearing on either side of the skull. The muscles work in combination to pivot the lower jaw up and down and to allow movement of the jaw from side to side, protraction and retraction.

The masseter muscle, which you can feel just in front and down from your ears when you

clench your teeth, is considered, for its size, the strongest muscle in your body. It is easy to understand how, if this muscle becomes very tight, it will not only stop you from opening your mouth but can also impact on how the other muscles around the joint will be affected.

TMJ is also associated with Tinnitus. Tinnitus is not fully understood. Tinnitus is the perception of a sound in the absence of any external noise. It is often described as a ringing, buzzing or humming in the ear and can occur on one side or both. Current thinking is that this is caused by either an ear problem, neck or jaw problem or both.

From a chiropractor's point of view, I can help when tinnitus is associated with jaw and neck problems. If you suffer from tinnitus and notice a change in the volume or pitch of your tinnitus when you open your mouth, chew or move

your head this could indicate that there is a relationship between your tinnitus and a neck or jaw problem.

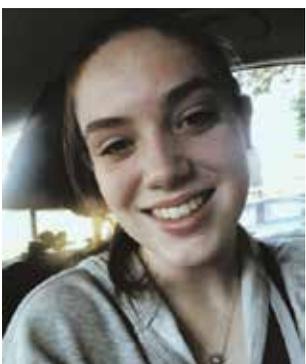
There are of course those who have jaw problems without tinnitus. By carefully assessing

muscle function around the jaw and neck, correction of any problems in that area will help to alleviate or remove the symptoms of, either jaw pain and dysfunction, headaches and tinnitus if it is from a somato-

sensory origin.

I have clinics in Skibbereen, Douglas and Kinsale if you would like an appointment please call 087 958 2362 or email through my website [www.eoinroechiropractic.com](http://www.eoinroechiropractic.com).

# Schull student to volunteer in Zambia



Áine Levis is a 19-year-old Psychology and Social Studies student currently studying in Cork. Originally from Schull, Áine has been involved in a multitude of local volunteering projects. This year she has decided to volunteer in Mazabuka in Zambia; on July 2, Áine and a team of seven others will be flying off to volunteer with SERVE for four weeks. Mazabuka is located in the Southern Province of Zambia in Africa, almost 200 kilometers south-west of Lusaka, the capital. SERVE is a Cork based development and volunteering organisation committed to tackling poverty in the majority world. The greatest cause of death in Mazabuka is HIV/AIDS – the disease has an immense impact on the average life expectancy in Zambia, which is just 42-years-old. Due to this low life expectancy, there is an increased number of orphans who end up living on the streets; this often leads to alcoholism and drug addiction, which is becoming more

prevalent in Mazabuka, and prostitution, which exacerbates the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Áine will be working with young people in Mazabuka that would otherwise be at risk of becoming homeless, developing substance addictions, entering into prostitution and developing life threatening illnesses and diseases.

Áine will be placed with the Assumption Parish Youth Project. This project targets young people, delivering programmes in the areas of primary education, practical youthwork, and life-skills training. She will be facilitating a programme of youthwork and youth leadership training, facilitating creative arts workshops for children and teenagers, with a focus on music, drama, and sport and supporting the on-going initiatives of the Assumption Parish Youth Project.

However, Áine needs to raise €2,995 in order to travel to Zambia. These funds will contribute towards her flights, insurance, training, in-country project costs and for the

SERVE Next Step Weekend. SERVE also uses these funds to make grants towards furthering the work of their overseas partners in Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, India, Kenya, Niger, Congo (DRC), Haiti, Brazil, Philippines, Thailand and Namibia.

Áine would really appreciate the support and would be very grateful for any donations. More information on this programme can be found on SERVE's website; [www.serve.ie](http://www.serve.ie). If you wish to donate you can do so by donating online through her GoFundMe page. The link can be found on her Facebook page 'SERVE Project to Zambia 2020' or on the GoFundMe website under 'SERVE Project to Zambia 2020'. If you wish to arrange an alternate method to donate you can email Áine at [aine.levis@cccork.ie](mailto:aine.levis@cccork.ie). These funds will contribute towards providing more children in Mazabuka with the opportunity to receive an education and the necessary life skills that will help break the vicious cycle of poverty.



## people Health & Lifestyle

### Bantry Bay Lions Club Diary



In 1925, Helen Keller challenged Lions to become 'knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness' and they accepted. Today, sight programmes remain one of their defining causes. For nearly 100 years, their members have worked on projects designed to prevent blindness, restore eyesight and improve eye care for hundreds of millions of people worldwide. The Bantry Bay Lions have been collecting used spectacles

for many years to facilitate this cause.

You can drop off your used spectacles at the following locations: Bantry General Hospital inside the front door; Bantry public library; Kenneally eye centre near the Garda Station; Newtown Pharmacy on Glengarriff road; Mealagh Valley Community Centre; Glengarriff pharmacy; Drimoleague pharmacy; Bera House on Glengarriff road; St Finbarr's Church in Bantry.

Contact Joan Donovan for any queries at 086-0563185.

The Bantry Bay Lions would like to belatedly acknowledge the generous donation of €150 to the Annual Food Appeal by the Bantry Active Retirement Group. This money was raised at their coffee mornings and was greatly appreciated.

The Bantry Bay Lions will be holding a 'Bucket' collection on Friday, February 21 in Bantry. Monies collected will be donated to the Australian Wildfire emergency relief fund. Buckets will be present in various locations throughout the town.

The Bantry Bay Lions Club is a non-profit organisation and is affiliated to the Lions

Club International Foundation (LCIF), which has 100 years of service. LCIF is a worldwide organisation of 1.4 million men and women who are dedicated to serving their communities and whose motto is 'We Serve'. It receives a four star rating consistently for Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) evaluators in terms of financial health, accountability and transparency. Lions are dedicated to giving back to the community and supporting those in need at home and abroad. All members are volunteers and pay a yearly membership fee to cover administrative costs. Any costs for travel and sustenance are

borne by the members so that 100 per cent of all funds raised go directly to the charity or disaster relief it is collected for. The members support the local community and provide assistance and financial support to various programs and local organisations. They meet at the St Goban's Centre at 7pm on the second Thursday of the month. To learn more about the Bantry Bay Lions you are cordially invited to visit their website at [www.bantrybaylions.com](http://www.bantrybaylions.com) or attend their monthly meeting.

*Provided by John Dervan, PRO – Bantry Bay Lions Club*

### Work through grief with the support of Clonakilty Bereavement Group

Are you grieving? Would you like help with your particular loss? Clonakilty Bereavement group is a safe and secure place in which to work through your grief. The group is offering support over a five-week period commencing on March 5 in Clonakilty. For information call 023 8834320 / 086 8259317.

## ADVERTORIAL : GEOPACE TRAINING

### Phlebotomy courses in Cork

Most have experienced it. A doctor says you need some blood tests and a half a dozen stabs and prods later – sometimes more – the doctor has your blood sample and the patient has a sore arm that resembles a pincushion.

Many healthcare institutions such as GP surgeries and hospitals now employ phlebotomists to perform the role of collecting blood from their in-patients and out-patients. Skilled phlebotomists – the healthcare professionals who take your blood – are the experts who have been gradually replacing nurses and

doctors and who specialise in just collecting blood samples. Phlebotomy posts are usually very flexible and can vary from full and part-time hospital posts to part time work in surgeries and clinics.

Geopace Training has built a nationwide reputation for teaching phlebotomy the right way and Geopace tutors travel from across country and even internationally to be train phlebotomy students.

Each Geopace class lasts two full days and at the end of the course students will have attained an accredited certificate in phlebotomy. Students

need no prior experience in healthcare and come from all walks of life and all ages. The Introduction to Phlebotomy Course provides a very thorough grounding in both theory and practical elements and prepares students up to the point of 'live blood draws'. "It's also a lot of fun" says Amy, admin manager at Geopace Training. "Many students email us after completing the course to say how enjoyable it was whilst others email us to let us know that they have been accepted for phlebotomy jobs".

Geopace instructors are some of the most elite in the industry

and the training programme is constantly updated to keep up with new developments and changes, so students receive the most current information and training available.

Students attending the course are very hands-on, practicing on artificial arms, which pump fake blood, with a choice of veins to perform and practise on. There is also a theory element to complete although there are no exams at the end. Students complete modules as they process through the course and it's almost impossible for anyone to fail. Once completed the course awards a nationally



recognised and accredited certificate in phlebotomy (accredited at Level 5 in Ireland).

If you like the idea of working in the healthcare profession then why not visit the Geopace

Training website for more information at: [www.geopace.net](http://www.geopace.net)

Courses are running in Cork on March 23 – 24 and April 30 – May 1.

## Cultivating compassionate hearts and minds



### MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

Susan O'Regan

Susan O'Regan teaches mindfulness and self-compassion courses and workshops throughout West Cork. For more information contact: [susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com) Mob: 087 2700572.

Being the month that is in it, what better topic to welcome Spring with but self-compassion! Self-compassion is a concept that I return to again and again, for both personal and professional reasons. It is defined by Kristin Neff in a number of ways, for example, "simply compassion directed inwards, relating to ourselves as the object of care and concern when faced with the experience of suffering". Evidence is accumulating on the benefits of compassion-based interventions for positive physical and mental health. In my experience I find that self-compassion, both in theory and practice, transforms something fundamental in the way we view ourselves, as well as supporting us in making gentle changes in our behaviours and attitudes.

I would guess that many of us did not develop self-compassion skills in our youth or learn how to respond to

difficult situations or emotions effectively. Growing up without the tools, we do the best we can, often finding our own ways of coping, but in adulthood we can eventually discover that our ways are not working effectively. This could explain our propensity to look outside of ourselves for comfort by seeking out distractions, sometimes as a means of escaping painful or uncomfortable emotions. Distractions can include over-indulgence in television or social media, food or drink, shopping, work, the list goes on. These distractions may provide short-term relief but what about the next challenging event or difficult emotion?

It is fortunate then, that mindfulness and self-compassion are life-skills that can be learned over time. These relational skills can help us to feel our feelings fully and also to manage painful feelings in a more sustainable manner. We can potentially move

through life with more ease and less need for distraction, in other words building our own resilience.

When I teach compassion-based mindfulness, I regularly have the privilege of witnessing people transform the way in which they relate to themselves. Their new mindfulness and self-compassion skills often supporting them to make subtle, or even profound life changes, leading ultimately to happier lives. In my work over the last number of years I have really become interested in the simple but sustained nature of these changes. They appear to last.

Studies show that self-compassion and compassion for others go hand-in-hand. Therefore, directing compassion and kindness towards ourselves is not at the expense of others. On the contrary, evidence suggests that being kind to ourselves actually enhances our sense of connection to others. Recent research has

even linked self-compassion to oxytocin, the so-called 'happy hormone', which has a calming effect on the mind and body. It seems clear then that developing a sense of kindness and care towards ourselves, as well as others, has hugely positive benefits for our health and wellbeing.

The following is an excerpt from 'Love after Love' by Derek Walcott:

"Give back your heart to itself, to the stranger who has loved you all your life, whom you ignored for another, who knows you by heart. Take down the love letters from the bookshelf, the photographs, the desperate notes, peel your own image from the mirror. Sit. Feast on your life".

Now take a few moments to reflect on your own relationship with yourself. What emotions come to your mind when you think about yourself? What kind of attitude do you have towards yourself? Is it kind or caring? Is this

something you ever take time to reflect upon? Maybe the time is now.

For more information on any of the following contact Susan on 087 2700572 or email: [susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com)

- A new Mindfulness Based Living Course (MBLC) is starting in Clonakilty on Tuesday, February 18. This is suitable for beginners or people who wish to deepen their practice. Please get in touch for more details or to book a place.
- A Spring workshop focusing on mindfulness and self-compassion, often described as the 'two wings of a bird' will run on Sunday, February 16 in Skibbereen from 10.30 - 1pm. Booking essential. €30
- Tuesday drop-in Sessions will return on February 18 in Skibbereen at the later time of 10 - 11am €10 at Market St Clinic.

people Health & Lifestyle

## Keep em' rolling – learn to repair bikes

The Clonakilty Bike Circus now offers apprenticeships and topical instruction in bicycle maintenance and repair. The free courses consist of monthly hands-on skills training, YouTube referrals, and a one-hundred-hour structured course leading to a certificate in basic

bike repair. Circus volunteers maintain the Clonakilty Bike Rental Scheme's fleet of bikes and the Silver Bullet, its trishaw for the elderly and less abled. These bikes provide learning opportunities for apprentices, future professionals in cycling and the growing field of pedalelectric bikes.

The instruction is offered at the Bike Circus' home in Christmas Tree Yard adjacent to Spiller's Lane in downtown Clonakilty. Chief mechanic Jack Kelleher has over fifty years' experience in bike repair and is joined by Jane O'Brien and Graeme Ghillie, both qualified mechanics.

For further information and upcoming cycles, including on our Valentine's cycle on Saturday February 15, drop by the Bike Circus or contact Jack via the Bike Circus Facebook page.

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people Arts & Entertainment

## Check mates

Is there any basic truth behind the common knowledge that the game of chess helps developing children's discipline, patience, creativity, mathematical capabilities, precision, concentration and aptitude in making accurate and fast decisions?



War with chess pieces and triumphed over the at-the-time unbeaten Russian champion in 1972) once said "chess is like war on a board".

Winning or losing, the game of chess is offering healthy and educational entertainment and has provided the younger members of the Clonakilty Chess Club with the chance to successfully compete at the Munster Chess Tournaments in 2019 and 2020 securing first and third place Pranav Prakash (U15, 2019 and 2020 respectively), second place Fionn Fargnoli (U9, 2019), third place Sean Fargnoli (U14, 2020).

If you or your child, or both, want to have a friendly game, join the Club at the O'Donovan's hotel every Monday from 7.30pm to 10pm (9pm for younger members).

Many studies on chess would show exactly that.

In any event, whether the strategic game of chess is an actual education tool or not, the members of the Clonakilty Chess Club enjoy their chess sessions greatly every Monday at the O'Donovan's hotel from 7:30pm to 10pm (9pm for younger members). The Club started out as a circle of friends with a common interest in chess and was established as the Clonakilty Chess Club in 2015 after catching the atten-

tion of local parents who saw it as an excellent and convenient opportunity to introduce their younger ones to this wonderful game, which promotes discipline, competitiveness, and concentration.

The Club currently counts up to ten regulars, half of which are minors, accompanied by their parents. The parents often join in and enjoy the strategic battle on the checkered board. The ultimate goal is to checkmate the opponent's king. As Robert 'Bobby' Fisher (former American world chess champion who fought the Cold

## West Cork competitor in Seán Ó Riada Gold Medal final

A young West Cork woman will be amongst the 15 finalists competing for the Seán Ó Riada Gold Medal in the Rochestown Park Hotel in Cork on Friday, February 7, and the event will be broadcast live on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta.



Mairéad Carey hails from the parish of Aughadown near Skibbereen. She has had a strong interest in Irish traditional music from a young age and plays the fiddle, tin whistle and piano, as well as the flute. Mairéad has many awards and scholarships to her name, and at the moment she is working as an Executive Officer in the civil service in Cork City, and playing music with the National Folk Orchestra. Mairéad previ-

ously qualified for the final in 2012 and 2016.

Peadar Ó Riada will present the event live from the Rochestown Park Hotel from 7pm – 10pm. Esteemed musicians

Michael Tubridy, Mary Bergin and Gary Hastings will have the difficult job of choosing the winner, and the criteria will include not only technical proficiency, but playing that demonstrates musicality and soul as well. The winner will take home the prestigious Seán Ó Riada Gold Medal, as well as €2500.

As part of the weekend events, there will be a musicians' conference on Saturday morning in the hotel, and the Coirm Órdha concert with past winners including box player Keelan McGrath and harper Úna Ní Fhlannagáin will take place on Saturday night.

## Strictly Fever hits Bantry again



Bantry has Strictly Fever again as the third Strictly Come Dancing event takes place in the West Cork town. Hosted by St. Finbarr's Boy NS, this hugely successful fundraiser has already raised almost €60,000 for this local school. This year, the school have partnered with Pieta House and in appreciation for the great work that they do, the committee will make a donation from this year's profits to Pieta House.

Twenty-two hopefuls are fired up and ready to dance,

directed by local choreographers Theresa O'Donoghue and Josie McAuliffe and are set to put on the performance of a lifetime. The theme for this year is 'Strictly Goes To The Movies' and will see the 11 couples replicate scenes from famous movies through the decades from Mamma Mia to Pulp Fiction and many more.

Brian Gleeson, principal at St Finbarr's Boys' National School thanked this year's dancers, as he welcomed them to the Strictly Family. He also congratulated the whole

community of Bantry for their amazing support of all local fundraisers, as well as thanking the sponsors, especially The Westlodge Hotel. Event co-ordinator Sandra Maybury referred to the school principal as the driving force behind Strictly Bantry, saying his enthusiasm for Strictly is infectious.

The live shows take place at The Westlodge Hotel, Bantry with a semi-final on March 7, followed by the grand final on Saturday March 14, when Strictly Bantry Winners 2020 will be announced.

## Farmer Michael and Kathleen heading for Skibbereen

West Cork are you ready for the absolute madness that is Farmer Michael and Kathleen? You may remember them from viral videos like There's no alcoholics in Ireland, F\*ck the Mayweathers and Beast from the East and now they are coming to The Tanyard, Skibbereen

on February 14. They will also be in Cork Opera House on March 15.

It's only three years since Stevo and Sineád began their journey on the comedy scene and since then they have gathered a following of over 500,000 people worldwide, with over 100 million views

on their video sketches. The duo have sold out shows in Ireland and the UK, including five nights in St George's Hall, three nights at Southport Comedy Festival, London, Cork and Belfast.

They have also collaborated with Official Rugby World Cup. Their videos have been featured in renowned online platforms such as LadBible, Benchwarmers, WorldStar hip hop, JOE.ie, The Daily Edge as well as mentions from international superstars Shaquille O'Neal and Marylon Wayans.

From depression and Donald Trump to gun control and Leo Varadkar, Farmer Michael and his long-suffering wife Kathleen tackle topical news with a satirical eye. The King & Queen of farming satire may offend some but aren't planning on quitting any time soon! As seen on: RTE, Six O Clock Show, CNN, FOXtv and SKY TV.



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## 'Vision 2020' exhibition at the West Cork Hotel

Eleven art students from the West Cork Campus, College of Commerce will be showcasing their 'work-in-progress' at an amazing new exhibition space at the West Cork Hotel, Skibbereen from February 8-14.

Curated by Aisling Roche and Paula Marten, the exhibition, which will include ceramics, painting, drawing and sculpture will showcase the work of these passionate and enthusiastic students, as they individually and collectively progress on their creative

journey.

Through a diverse range of disciplines and techniques the group explore, challenge and re-imagine personal experiences or subjects covering a range of themes including, Growing and Forgotten Language, Flowing and Natural Forms, Masks and Emotions, Time and Remembering, Found Items Reanimated, Finding Oneself, Seasons and Reasons, Meditation and Healing, and Rebirth and Renewal.

Students will also be giving demonstrations throughout the

week for people to learn more about the various mediums and processes involved in creating the work. Come and experience this exciting new work from a unique group of fresh and innovative emerging artists.

Renowned supporter of West Cork art and artists, Catherine Hammond, will officially open the exhibition on Saturday, February 8 at 2pm.

The exhibition is open Monday to Friday, 11-6pm, with late opening until 8pm on Thursday, February 13.



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**Just Mercy**  
**Little Women**  
**1917**  
**Spies in Disguise**

**MOVIES THIS MONTH**

**Sensory Friendly Screening**  
1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of Every Month at 11.15am



**FILM**  
**RYAN'S REVIEWS**

Ryan Edwards

**Dolittle**

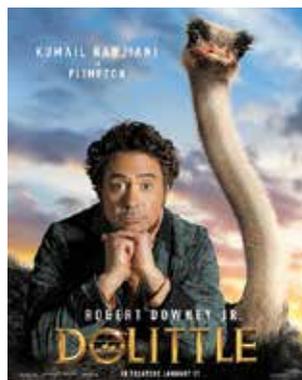
PG 101 mins

Director: Stephen Gaghan  
Starring: Robert Downey Jr., Antonio Banderas, Tom Holland, Michael Sheen

**Plot:** Dr Dolittle and his new apprentice must travel to find the fruit of an undiscovered tree that everyone thinks is a myth just to save the Royal house.

**Review:** Dr Dolittle is back and thankfully not like the Eddie Murphy version. This time it is set during the reign of Queen Victoria (Jessie Buckley) but her reign isn't going quite to plan. This is when she enlists the help of the now recluse Dr Dolittle (Robert Downey Jr.) and his faithful companions and his new apprentice Tommy Stubbins (Harry Collett). Dr Dolittle not only has to face an old rival, but also his own

\*\*\*\*\* 5 stars "Take my money and show me again!"  
\*\*\*\* 4 stars "I'll see that again when it comes out to buy"  
\*\*\* 3 stars "I'll buy it and watch it when it's in the bargain bin"  
\*\* 2 stars "I may watch it again sometime"  
\* 1 star "This is why I'm glad for memory loss"  
No star "Don't even bother"



Harry Collett, as Tommy, is a great supporting character.

The film wouldn't be anything of course without the fantastic animals, both as part of Dolittle's entourage and the ones they meet on their journey. The CGI work for the animals for the most part is pretty good with perhaps a handful of times where the animation isn't so great.

The film is massively enjoyable due to the voice cast. That is the main reason that Dolittle works as well as it does, the fantastic supporting voice cast that make the animals come to life. We have the ever-brilliant voice of Emma Thompson as Poly the parrot, a strong and decisive force in Dolittle's life. Jip voiced by Tom Holland, Dolittle's loyal advisor dog. And all other manner of incredible stars such as Rami Malek (Bohemian Rhapsody), John Cena (WWE, Fast 9), Ralph Fiennes (Harry Potter series) and Craig Robinson (Mr Robot, Brooklyn Nine Nine). We are also treated to the performances by such incredible actors as Jim Broadbent, Antonio Banderas

and Michael Sheen.

This film is enjoyable if you are looking for something to just pass some time when it's raining or it is a great choice for a family, as I am sure the kids would absolutely love this. This film will be well-accepted by all types of viewers however I can't imagine watching it twice. It will however entertain for the hour and forty minutes run time without a doubt. Get the kids in to see it, as I am sure this is one that is better watched in the cinema. *3 Stars*

Why not catch these and all the latest films at Ireland's number one best value cinema Park Cinema Clonakilty and second best value cinema Cine-max Bantry

What to look out for:

**Sonic the Hedgehog:** After discovering a small, blue, fast hedgehog, a small-town police officer must help it defeat an evil genius who wants to do experiments on it.

**Dark Waters:** A corporate defence attorney takes on an environmental lawsuit against a chemical company that exposes a lengthy history of pollution.

**Dawnhill:** Barely escaping an avalanche during a family ski vacation in the Alps, a married couple is thrown into disarray as they are forced to reevaluate their lives and how they feel about each other.

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**Hidden Stories – call out for migrant stories**

LifeFM 93.1, in association with Community Integration Fund, is launching 'Hidden Stories', a new series that will celebrate and showcase the writing of migrants and refugees in Cork.

As creators of high quality radio dramas for 10 years, LifeFM is delighted to provide an opportunity to have voices of Ireland's new residents heard. There is no limitation on form, it can be creative fiction, non-fiction or poetry.

LifeFM will host some free workshops for migrants in the Cork area on how to get their writing out there in the months of February and March so stay tuned for more information.

The chosen pieces will be broadcast on the radio in April and each program also will be posted online.

Entries must include the name and contact details of the entrant. Regardless of time spent resident in Ireland, all migrants are welcomed and encouraged to enter. There are no theme restrictions and entries should be no longer than 2,000 words. Each entrant must be currently resident in Ireland and is restricted to one story or three poems, so make sure it's your best work!

The deadline for submissions is 5pm, March 28. Please send your work to submissions@lifefm.ie or post them to Hidden Stories, LifeFM, Unit G, Deanrock Industrial Estate, Toghher, Cork

This project is supported by the Community Integration Fund.

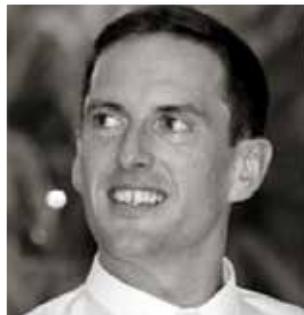
**De Barra's Spoken Word**

Another fine performance of variety took place at De Barra's Spoken Word in January. The writing challenge was favourably received, congratulations to all who took part. The main spotlight featured a variety of guests who had earlier submitted work to have an accompaniment composed and presented by Paul and Kieran McMahon and Pat Barrett. Once again the eclectic mixture of slide and acoustic guitar together with double-bass provided an extra dimension to the spoken word, with some notable presentations by Moze Jacobs, Stan Notte, Anton Floyd, John McGuiggan, Cathal O'Reilly, Claire Barton, Nick Smith and thanks to all others who contributed. Congratulations for some fine composing to Paul and thanks to Moze Jacobs for the stand-up interview.

Next month's guest at De Barra's Spoken Word on Wednesday, March 4, is Shauna Lee Lynch, a Cork-native writer,

actor, director and producer. In November 2019, she won the All-Ireland Poetry Slam Championship and will represent Ireland in the World and European Championship this year. Since graduating from Ireland's Conservatory of Music and Drama she has been involved in many projects around Ireland and abroad. Most recently she wrote, co-produced and acted in 'Wishful Thinking' premiered at Dublin Fringe Festival 2019 before coming to the Cork Arts Theatre in November 2019. As a spoken word artist she has performed her work as part of the multi-disciplinary ensemble The Crossover at Electric Picnic and in Dali (Cork). She has also performed at Cork City Culture Night, LitFest (St. Clementin, France), The Garden Party (Lisbon), Fire and Dust (Coventry) among others. Her work playfully weaves modern feminism and pop culture with politics, social commentary and tradition. Thanks as ever to De Barra's, Cork County Council Arts' Office and all who supported. Further enquiries, email to debarrasspokenword@gmail.com.

people Arts & Entertainment



MUSIC

Gary Hannon

Gary plays with the Clonakilty Jazz Collective every Monday night in the Emmet Hotel in Clonakilty.

## An Interview with singer Leah Sohotra



What is most noticeable about Leah Sohotra (Lee-ah Suh-hathra) is her strength. Her experiences have made her the woman she is – real, insightful, honest, direct, artistic, loving, funny and happy. She has always found herself working in jobs in philanthropy – in a homeless shelter, women’s Rape Crisis Centre, and she now works full-time for Cork Simon. She says, “I love it! I really enjoy it and it’s a very good organisation! They treat their workers really well.” It’s perhaps not surprising that she works there, when you hear her story.

**LS:** “I came from a very poor family. My mother was a single mother. She was a barber, and she had disabilities – mostly mental trauma. We didn’t have much...so I didn’t get a lot of music lessons. I always sang since I was little. My father called me ‘The Bird’, as I always sang – I sang more than I talked. But I never wrote music – I always thought it was a thing that other people did. Then I had this cathartic experience one day and it was very intense; and then afterwards I had this song in my head. I started writing after that.

“Grendel was the second song I ever wrote—a few years ago, when I was 31 or 32. It’s about an abusive relationship. I was thinking about the guy and how abusive he was and... he was just a monster! But I wanted to be empathetic towards him, you know – how did I contribute to this? I learnt in theatre school that if you’re portraying the villain, they never think that they’re the bad guy. It made me think that somebody who is wounded that deeply, and they’re that abusive, and they’re not that easy to love. But it’s not your fault; it’s not a straightforward thing. You can’t blame

yourself and you can’t blame them. It’s like poetry, you know – you want to tell the truth – you don’t want to just dance around the issue. I personally don’t like that – I like when people get down into the nitty-gritty.

“I’ve had a lot of experiences up to now. I know about being different. I know about trauma and sexual violence and all that kind of stuff. That’s life, and I like to put it all out in the open, take away all that shame about what people feel about all those things, and just talk about it and ‘change it’, you know?”

**WCP:** Is this your first album?

**LS:** “This is my first album. I had an EP before this with the band *Weird Dogs*. The EP includes four of my songs about women who influenced me including one called ‘Tuam’ that is based on my mother’s experience of being put into a Catholic home for unwed mothers when she was fifteen and pregnant for my sister. You can hear it on youtube. It consistently elicits strong reactions from audiences.”

**WCP:** Breaded Crickets is the title of your album – what does the name refer to?

**LS:** “When I was little I used to live in a basement apartment that had a lot of crickets in it. It was a small apartment – it had one room that we all lived in, the kitchen and the bed were all in one space. The crickets used to come in there all the time. I feel endearment towards crickets. I love them and their chirping – their sound is very homely for me. I think my songs are like my crickets. And Martin [Leahy, producer] has breaded them for me [laughs]. He’s made them into something a bit more edible, I suppose. Bread is not just about food, it’s about wholesomeness, sustenance

and survival.”

**WCP:** Martin Leahy produced and played perhaps 15 instruments on the album?

**LS:** “Yeah, he’s amazing. I love working with Martin. I feel like he feels me—he really gets me.”

**WCP:** Mick Flannery also plays on two tracks on the album.

**LS:** “Mick is such a good story-teller. He can make up a story then tell it from the perspective of the characters. He co-wrote Sam’s Song, but the rest are all mine.”

**WCP:** Can you tell me about another song on the album?

**LS:** “The song ‘Boy With Powers’ is a really hard one for me. That is a song I wrote in memory of a boy that I loved so much, with schizophrenia. He had mental health issues and he took his own life when he was 20. I will never forget that. I know that it’s so hard to exist in society with mental health issues. I know that from Cork Simon, I knew that from living with my mother and her mental health issues. People ostracise you, and you feel embarrassed and then you don’t know what to do. I think it stands out on the album.”

**WCP:** “You’re playing the wonderful Levis’s in Ballydehob on Friday, February 28. Any other dates planned for West Cork?”

**LS:** “No, the album launch, and Levis’s the following night and that’s it for now.”

Breaded Crickets album launch is in Coughlan’s in the City on Thursday, February 27 at 9pm. Tickets €15 (including a CD copy of the album).

**My gig of the month is:** Sharon Shannon, in De Barra’s Wednesday, February 12, Tickets: €25.

## COMPETITION

### Action-packed calendar at De Barra’s Folk Club for February

#### SHARON SHANNON live album recording

DeBarra’s Folk Club is delighted to welcome internationally acclaimed artist Sharon Shannon to record an intimate, live acoustic album in the bar to celebrate her 30 years in music on February 12.

Sharon has been playing in the warmth of DeBarra’s Folk Club on a regular basis since the start of her career, and wants to capture the rich atmosphere on film and audio.

“I love the warm intimacy of DeBarra’s,” Sharon said.

“The enthusiasm of the audience, the historic atmosphere, as well as the generosity and friendship of the Blackwell family and their staff is what will make this show truly special for me.”

For this once-in-a-lifetime session, Sharon will be flanked by local guitarist Jim Murray, as well as Jack Maher on guitar, mandolin and vocals.

“We’re so very touched Sharon has chosen the venue for this very special occasion,” said Ray Blackwell, who runs the family-owned DeBarra’s with his brother Brian. “It will be a magical night.”

Doors open at 9pm and the strictly limited tickets cost €25 + booking fee. (PLEASE NOTE: This show will be filmed and recorded, all ticket holders must consent to this.)

#### PADDY KEENAN and SEAMIE O DOWD

2020 is a landmark year for Paddy Keenan and as such, he will give a special performance at his spiritual home of DeBarra’s with Seamie O Dowd on February 27. This performance show will be recorded by the team behind ‘Sé mo Laoch’ TG4 to be included as part of a programme on Paddy for its eleventh season.

Paddy Keenan is an Irish player of the uilleann pipes



who first gained fame as a founding member of The Bothy Band. Since that group’s dissolution in the late 1970s, Keenan has released a number of solo and collaborative recordings, and continues to tour both as a soloist, and with a range of other artists.

A long time performer at DeBarra’s, Paddy also spent many years living in Clonakilty.

“*The Jimi Hendrix of the pipes.*” – Donal Lunny

Seamie O’Dowd is a guitarist, singer, and songwriter who also plays fiddle, harmonica, mandolin, and a number of other instruments.

He has travelled worldwide playing music and has shared stages and played with many great musicians and bands including; Mairtin O’Connor, Cathal Hayden, Christy Moore, The Chieftains, Jimmy Higgins, Tommy Emmanuel, Dervish, Steve Wickham, Matt Molloy, Liam O’Flynn, Thom Moore, Dick Gaughan, Cathy Jordan, Rick Epping, Kieran Quinn, John Joe Kelly, Aminah Hughes and many others.

His experience also includes recording production,

teaching and more recently, film soundtrack work, and encompasses solo performance, as well as extensive work with bands and small groups as both a member and a session musician.

‘Sé mo Laoch TG4 tells the story of some of our greatest traditional musicians and singers. These one-hour documentaries celebrate the musicianship and creativity of some of our most well-known and respected performers. The series, produced for TG4, showcases the huge diversity of Irish traditional music and musicians. Each programme is as unique as it is intimate and tells the story of these seminal musicians in their own words.

For tickets go to [debarra.ie](http://debarra.ie)

.....  
West Cork People has five pairs of tickets to give away to each of these gigs in DeBarra’s Folk Club. Be in with a chance of winning by send your name, phone number and preferred gig with ‘DeBarra’s Competition’ in the subject line to [info@westcorkpeople.ie](mailto:info@westcorkpeople.ie) before February 10.

### Damien Dempsey plays Bantry’s Maritime Hotel in April

Renowned for his legendary gigs Damien Dempsey performs at the Maritime Hotel, Bantry on April 3. Damien’s connection with his audience is so palpable that the most cynical of souls cannot help but be moved by the experience. He is that rare gem of an artist, an ex-boxer with the soul of a poet, whose heroes and influences are as diverse as Christy Moore, Shane McGowan, Luke Kelly and Bob Marley. Damien has released eight albums to date but it is his connection to the human condition that sets him apart from most of us.

Tickets from €30 available from Ticketmaster. Overnight stay at the Maritime hotel plus two tickets to the gig from €170 per night.

## people Arts & Entertainment

# Maurice O'Callaghan returns with musical rock opera 'The White Lady of Kinsale'

Native West Cork film director and writer Maurice O'Callaghan returns to directing, this time with a musical, which tells the story of the legend of 'The White Lady of Kinsale'. The show, which has been in production for over two years, will take to the stage in Kinsale Community College over two weekends, from Thursday February 20-29, 2020.

'The White Lady of Kinsale', set in the era of the Battle of Kinsale, Co. Cork, tells the story of the tragic romance between the doomed lovers: Eoghan O'Neill, the sole survivor of the great Irish clan of the O'Neills, and Wilful Warrender, the daughter of the commander of the new English garrison, constructed after the battle, which saw the demise of the Gaelic nation and the emergence of the English domination of Ireland.

The Rock Opera Musical, directed and produced by O'Callaghan is set to be a large stage extravaganza, combining elements of '70s Pink Floyd style rock, classical opera and Riverdance style choreography.

RTÉ's Dancing with The Stars winner Jake Carter has been cast to play the lead male role of Eoghan O'Neill, with rising Cork actress and singer Aislinn Hegarty making her debut as The White Lady, Wilful Warrender.

Commenting on the production of the show, Maurice O'Callaghan, the director and producer of 1994 film Broken Harvest, as well as the writer of critically acclaimed books such as A Day for The Fire, and A Man Who Was Somebody said:

"The White Lady of Kinsale is somewhat of a passion project of mine, and although I have directed feature films, and written substantial novels, this is my first foray into stage production. I wrote a lot of the songs as a young man in my early twenties, when I was studying Law at UCC, so it has been in the pipeline for some time to bring the production to stage. I revisited the score about two years ago, and wrote many more new songs, which have a naturally have a more mature tone – songs you could only write after decades of life experience under your belt.

"I am thrilled to have such great young talent involved, and I know that Jake and Aislinn will do a stellar job in playing the lead roles. It is particularly special to be producing the show for the first time in Kinsale, very close to my hometown of Newsestown, and where the story was borne from"

Jake Carter, who will make his Musical Rock Opera debut playing Eoghan O'Neill said; "I am so excited to start working on "The White Lady of Kinsale" in the coming weeks. The whole cast is really talented, there was an instant connection between everyone at initial rehearsals, so I'm certain it's going to be an amazing experience both on and off stage. I have worked on stage in a number of different capacities before, but this is the first ever Musical/Rock Opera that I am starring in so I am super excited to get started and 'get this show on the road'."

Tickets can be bought through GR8 events at [www.gr8events.ie/whiteladyofkinsale](http://www.gr8events.ie/whiteladyofkinsale) or at the door on the night. All tickets are priced at €25.

Film director and writer Maurice O'Callaghan



## COMPETITION

### Revolting Rhymes at The Everman



The Everyman is thrilled to present a production of Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes.

This fantastic double-billing of two favourites: Little Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs will delight audiences anew. Including an introduction to an 11-piece orchestra with conductor and with a narrator Dahl's naughty, mischievous humour is sure to blow your house in!

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Be in with a chance of winning a Family Pass to Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes on Saturday, February 29, at 12noon at The Everyman. Send your name and phone number with 'Revolting Rhymes' in the subject line to [info@westcorkpeople.ie](mailto:info@westcorkpeople.ie) before February 20.

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Clonakilty Community Art Centre  
2 Asna Square, Clonakilty, Co. Cork



## Clonakilty Community Arts Centre exhibition

Clonakilty Community Arts Centre is delighted to welcome local Clonakilty artist Cathal O'Regan as the exhibiting artist for the month of February.

The exhibition will include a collection of work including drawings and wood-burning experiments over the past few years. The works will include various mediums and ideas.

"I wanted to better understand the ancient past and the use of symbolism and I did so through drawing," explains Cathal.

"Working with ancient symbols and mythologies of different parts of the world, especially those with the use



of animals and what those animals symbolised to those cultures of ancient times."

As part of the exhibition there will be drawings of twelve endangered animals to

highlight the impact of man on other species in our world.

Also included is a preview on a comic illustration combining both modern and ancient worlds.

Finally, a newly discovered love for wood burning: Cathal has been wood burning designs onto various pieces such as tables, presses and boards. Following on with burning designs on to hurleys, some include heraldry, crests, family names and place names. Most crests and names are of Irish origin and culture.

The opening will take place on Saturday, February 8 at 7pm. All are welcome.



## THE NATURAL GARDENER

Noah Chase

Noah studied horticulture at the Eden Project in Cornwall, England. He now co-manages a family run nursery, Deelish Garden Centre in Skibbereen, specialising in rare, unusual and edible plants. His passion is sustainable gardening, useful plants and care of the environment.



The potato is the third most important food crop in the world after rice and wheat in terms of human consumption. More than a billion people worldwide eat potato, and global total crop production exceeds 300 million metric tons! Here in Ireland we import over 70,000 tons each year, with over 50 per cent coming in from the UK! Our average annual potato consumption is 85kg a person, (2.5 times higher than the world average) but in the 1990s that figure was 140kg a head!

We have ideal growing conditions in West Cork and we are finding that many of our customers here at Deelish Garden Centre are getting fantastic returns on their home-grown spuds! This season we have over 30 varieties in stock. Each year we try to source new varieties, as well as stocking tried and tested favorites. For this month's article, I thought it would be a good idea to have a look at how to grow your own.

Seed potatoes are divided into three main groups listed below:

### First earlies

- \* Plant early to mid March. 10-12 weeks to mature.
- \* Less chance of blight but smaller harvest.
- \* Popular varieties; Orla, Duke of York, Sharpe's express.

### Second earlies

- \* Plant mid March to early April. 12-14 weeks to ma-

# The humble potato is a joy to grow

ture.

- \* Small chance of blight. Good selection Medium harvest.
- \* Popular varieties; British queens, Charlotte, Nicola.

### Main crop

- \* Plant in April. 18-22 weeks to mature.
- \* More chance of blight. Large harvest
- \* Popular varieties; Golden wonders, Kerr's pink, the Sarpo group.

### CHITTING

Once you have decided which varieties you want to grow, it is time to 'chit'. Seed potatoes, particularly earlies and second earlies benefit from 'chitting' prior to being planted. This process encourages strong shoots to sprout over several weeks to encourage faster growth and heavier crops once they're in the ground.

From late January/February, chit your seed potatoes by setting them out in seed trays, shallow boxes or empty egg cartons in a cool, bright, frost free position to allow them to sprout. You will notice that the immature 'chits' are all at one end (called the rose end). Place the rose end upwards. Sturdy 'chits' will form and should grow one inch in length. Be careful not to let them get any longer, as they can break when planting out – slowing down the growth. Main crops don't necessarily need to be chitted.

### PLANTING OUT

Once you are happy with your chitted seed potatoes and the weather seems right, you are ready to plant! Here in West Cork, it is possible to plant seed potatoes right through the year under the protection of glasshouses and polytunnels. Outside it is possible to plant out after the last frost, (typically mid to late March). The soil should be freshly dug over and weed-free. The traditional way is to dig a narrow trench 12cm (5in) deep. This can be lined with compost or even grass clippings for a better crop. As potatoes are hungry growers, I also add Topmix organic pellets (a mix of chicken pellets and seaweed dust with added potash) to the trench at this stage. If possible a mulch of well-rotted manure topped with seaweed and wood ash would be even better. The seed tubers are spaced 30cm (12") apart for earlies and 37cm (15") for main crop varieties. The rows should be 24" (60cm) apart for earlies and 75cm (30in) apart for maincrop.

There are other ways of growing if you do not have a large garden, or any garden at

all! Small crops of potatoes can be grown in large, deep containers (rubble sacks and stacked tyres also work) and this is a good way of getting an early batch of new potatoes. Line the bottom 15cm (6in) of the container with potting compost and plant the seed potato just below this. As the new stems start growing, keep adding compost until the container is full.

### AFTERCARE

It is important to 'earth up' potato crops as the shoots emerge above ground, to protect them from frosts, which blacken the shoots and delay production. Simply draw some soil over the top of the shoots to cover them again.

If there is a chance of a late frost, cover the new shoots with a garden fleece or straw. Remove when the threat of frost has passed.

First earlies and second earlies in particular require plenty of water during prolonged dry weather especially when tubers are starting to form. This is also a good time to feed with an organic liquid concentrate. This will strengthen the plants against disease and improve yields.

When the stems reach a height of 23cm (9") above ground they should be earthed up again to prevent tubers near to the soil surface from turning green.

Weed out any unwanted plants along the trenches through the season (if the potatoes are growing well, there won't be many).

### HARVESTING

Harvesting times will vary depending on the growing season, weather conditions at harvest time and the size of tuber you want. Start to harvest first earlies as 'new potatoes' when the plants begin to flower, approximately 10-12 weeks from planting. Tubers will generally become larger the longer their growing period.

Maincrop varieties are usually left for at least two weeks after the leaves and stems have withered, to allow the skins to set. Cut down the stems with secateurs to just above soil level as the leaves wither and yellow, or if they show signs of blight. After harvesting, leave the tubers on the soil surface for a few hours to dry and cure the skin. Once dry, store them in paper or hessian sacks in a dark, cool but frost-free place. Avoid storing in polythene bags, as potatoes will 'sweat' and rot. Some main crop varieties tend to taste sweeter a few weeks or months after har-

vesting, as the starches change to sugar.

### COMMON PROBLEMS

**Potato blight:** This is the most common disease in our wet, warm summers. The initial symptoms are a rapidly spreading brown watery rot, affecting the leaves, and stems. Tubers can be affected too, and have a reddish-brown decay below the skin, firm at first but soon developing into a soft rot.

**Remedy:** Spray potato crops with a protective fungicide even before signs of blight become apparent. Copper sulphate is used as a preventative, not a cure. Add 50g Bluestone (copper sulphate) to two litres of hot water. In a separate container add 60g washing soda to three litres of hot water. After half an hour, mix the two liquids and spray directly onto the potatoes, making sure to spray under the leaves as well. Do not spray if raining, as the mixture will not stick. Use a watering can in the absence of a sprayer and ensure to clean it thoroughly after use. This five litre mixture is enough for 20 square metres. Begin spraying this potato blight treatment from about June, particularly when periods of wet weather are forecast and spray again after a few weeks to protect any new growth. We have also had great feedback from gardeners spraying with horsetail concentrate available as a concentrate here at Deelish or see last year's article to make your own. This year I also plan to trial Carbo vegetabilis and Silica as a homeopathic plant spray, recommended to me by my wife who, as well as a great gardener, is also a registered homeopath.

If plants become infected they should be removed and destroyed. Where potato crops have already developed tubers then these can be saved by cutting away the foliage and stems. Leave the soil undisturbed for 2/3 weeks to kill off any lingering spores so that they don't infect the crop when it is lifted.

Always try and grow potatoes on new ground or rotate every year if possible. Keeping the potatoes fed with a good organic fertiliser containing plenty of trace elements will also help with preventing blight.

The first of the Sarpo potato varieties was Mira, followed a couple of years later by Axona Blue Danube, and others. These varieties have been bred for their excellent blight resistance and high yields.

**Potato blackleg:** Potato blackleg is a common bacterial

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disease, which causes black rotting at the stem base. Initial infections cause stunted growth and yellowing stems. If tubers form, the flesh may be grey or brown and rotten.

**Remedy:** Blackleg generally infects individual plants rather than entire crops and does not spread between plants or persist in the soil. Remove and destroy any infected plants, improve soil drainage and plant blackleg resistant potato varieties such as Charlotte.

**Potato scab:** This disease causes raised scab-like lesions on the potato surface. It does not affect the taste of the potato, and is easily removed on peeling.

**Remedy:** Common Scab on potatoes is best controlled by improving poor soil conditions with the addition of organic matter and by keeping potato crops well watered throughout the growing season. Use any infected tubers first and do not store them. Home guard is well known variety for scab resistance.

**Eelworm:** Initially, crops display patches of poor growth and affected plants may show chlorosis and wilting, with poor top growth. These symptoms develop from the ground upwards. Heavily infested plants die prematurely and yield a poor crop of under-sized tubers.

**Remedy:** There are no pesticides available to home

gardeners, which will control eelworms, and so crop rotation should be used to avoid spreading the pest and to reduce infestations. Some varieties are more resistant. Nicola (one of my favourites) and Picasso have good Eelworm resistance.

**Slugs:** Slugs cause damage to both the foliage and to the developing potato tubers. Damage is fairly obvious as the culprits are easily identified by the silvery slime trails that are left around the plant foliage and on the soil surface.

**Remedy:** There are a multitude of ways to kill or remove slugs and snails including homemade remedies such as beer traps. Use eco-friendly slug pellets or you can try nematodes or copper barriers. Sarpo Mira, Golden wonders and a few others have good slug resistance.

One of the attractions of growing the humble potato is just how easy it is to grow, and how much you get in return for a bit of digging. It is also an excellent crop to grow on new ground where you plan to grow other vegetables in future seasons. Don't let any of the above common problems put you off giving them a go, as they really are a joy to grow! Wishing you all the best with the growing season ahead and remember gardening doesn't have to cost the earth!

## people Gardening



## GARDENING

John Hosford  
The Weekend Garden  
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## Gardening in February

With the days getting longer, our gardening calendar is becoming busier.

## Vegetables

Now is the time to prepare ground for vegetable seeds and plants. Dig in plenty of well-rotten farmyard or stable manure or well-composted garden compost. If either isn't available 'Gee-up' makes an excellent substitute. It gives very good results adding organic material to your soil making it more friable and easier to work.

Put seed potatoes sprouting. Remember to keep them in a frost-free place.

Tomatoes and cucumbers may be sown from mid-February onwards in a heated, frost-free greenhouse, porch or conservatory. Remember to keep frost-free.

If temperatures aren't kept at the optimum recommended, the seeds will fail to germinate. The

reverse side of the seed packets normally carries a wealth of essential information regarding sowing, growing-on and optimum growing conditions for your chosen variety/varieties.

Use clean, fresh compost in clean trays or pots. It is a good idea to warm up the compost prior to sowing. Bring in a bag of compost into the greenhouse a week prior to sowing to allow it to warm-up.

Peas can be sown indoors in old but clean guttering, which has had drainage holes drilled in the bottom. Guard against mice taking the seeds.

Plant out garlic and shallots if you have light soil.

Net vulnerable crops especially late winter and spring cabbage against pigeon attack.

Protect also purple sprouting broccoli, which is a most valuable crop, providing delicious spears in the slackest period of the year for fresh vegetables from your own garden, often referred to as 'The Hungry Gap Period'.



Rake in lime to your soil if your soil is acid. You can test your soil with soil test kits available from garden centres and agricultural/horticultural suppliers. Alternatively you can have your soil tested by agricultural or horticultural consultants.

Feed spring cabbage with a high nitrogen feed. Seek out an organic sourced fertiliser and apply in showery weather.

Warm up your soil by putting frost protection fleece, cloches, cold frames or old windows in place in readiness for early sowing and planting.

Secure well against wind damage.

Prepare ground for new asparagus beds. Get rid of all pernicious, perennial weeds. Add an organic material such as Gee-up. Remove stones and clods.

If you were not already practising a rotation system in your vegetable plot, it would be wise to implement one. A rotation system involves keeping groups of the same type of a vegetable in the same group in the plot. The same group ideally should not return to the same piece of ground for at least three to five years. Good rotation will reduce the incidence and build-up of troublesome pests and diseases.

Check out some good gardening books for more detail and information on vegetable growing.

Do peruse and visit your local bookshops to see what they have in stock and for their recommendations.

## Planting Trees and Hedging

Avail of dry, frost-free weather to continue planting of decorative, shelter and forest trees. Protect with tree guards against rabbit, hare and deer damage. If deer are in your vicinity protect well with guards sufficiently high to provide protection (Yes, we do come across deer damage in parts of West Cork with sometimes up to 20 deer being observed in a single sighting!)

Get rid of competing weeds and scutch grass prior to planting.

Use a slow-release organic fertiliser prior to planting.

## Planting and Dividing Snowdrops

Once they have finished flowering, divide your stock of snow-



drops and divide them strategically throughout your garden. Plant in large, natural-looking drifts, in woodland gardens, under the shade of deciduous trees but do be brave and mass plant in free flowing mass drifts. Use a spade or fork to lift your clump of snowdrops.

Insert the spade away from the centre of the clump to avoid damaging the bulbs. The bulbs can be surprisingly deep, so be prepared to dig down. Once they are out of the ground, sort out into smaller groups of bulbs ready for positioning in their new site/s. Remove any damaged or diseased bulbs. Replant each clump at the same depth as they were previously, loosening up the base of the planting hole with a garden fork. Water well after planting to help settle the soil around them. Do visit some of the wonderful snowdrop displays around the country.

## Fruit Garden



Continue planting of fruit trees and bushes where soil and weather conditions permit. Cover strawberries for an early crop with cloches or cold frames. Complete the formative pruning of apples and pears. Continue pruning of mature trees except in hard frosts Prune established autumn-fruiting raspberries. Tip summer-fruiting raspberries. Protect the blossoms of early-flowering, wall-trained fruit trees with hessian, netting, straw or extra strength frost protection fleece. Hand-pollinate if flowering is early and insects are scarce. Use an artist's brush to hand pollinate.

Mulch gooseberries, currants and cane fruit with a mulching of weed-free farmyard or stable manure or good well composted garden compost. All organic material should be well-composted

and should be free of persistent, troublesome perennial weeds such as nettles, docks, bindweed, scutch grass or briars.

## Lawn Care

Begin soil preparation for a new lawn at the end of the month if weather and soil conditions permit.

## Perennial Borders



Cut back grasses left since the autumn. Also, cut back faded shoots from last year's perennial displays. Protect early emerging perennials such as Delphiniums and Lupins against the ravaging attacks of slugs. Get stakes and supports ready to support taller growing varieties.

## Summer Bulbs

Summer bulbs such as Dahlias, Begonias, Gladioli, Nerines and Canna will start to arrive now in the garden shops and garden centres. The more tender bulbs shouldn't be planted outside until all risk of frost is over. However, you can start tender bulbs such as Dahlias and Begonias off indoors in a greenhouse or conservatory for subsequent planting outdoors when all risk of frost is over. They should be well-hardened off and acclimatised prior to planting outside in late May or early June.

Choose your bulbs carefully ensuring they are sound, plump bulbs, free of any rots or fungal infections.

## The 'Big Grow' is back

Innocent's 'Big Grow' is back, recruiting a whole new bunch of the littlest veggie growers with the mission to help kids to eat more fresh fruit and veg.

Now in its ninth year, innocent will once again partner with the growing experts at GIY and give primary school kids the chance to grow their own tasty food. The campaign has been developed closely with teachers and educational specialists to give aspiring junior gardeners

the information and tools to create their own little vegetable patch in their garden, classroom or even on their windowsill.

Speaking about the partnership GIY founder Michael Kelly said, "Studies show that children who grow their own food are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables and show higher levels of knowledge about nutrition. The children not only learn the science of growing, they also experience the joy of growing and eating their own food. GIY

calls this 'Food Empathy', which is a deeper connection with food, and is proven to lead to a healthier life long-term. We are delighted to work with innocent on this once again and we hope these life lessons stay with our growers into adulthood."

Joining the campaign this year is food writer Lilly Higgins, the friendly foodie behind the book, 'Stuff I Make, Bake and Love' and comedy TV show 'Fancy Vittles', hosted with her sister Maeve.

The innocent Big Grow is open for primary schools across the country to apply for a free Grow Kit for their school. Schools can join the growvolution by visiting innocentbiggrow.com. This year, for the first time, the school judged to have cultivated the most impressive grows will receive €1,000 towards their school garden, adding an extra incentive for the nation's little growers to get involved and grow crazy.

# Time to get sowing



## A COTTAGE GARDEN PROJECT

Jean Perry

Over the coming months Jean Perry of Glebe Gardens will share the ongoing successes and failures of growing a small cottage garden using no-dig and organic principles to see just how much food she can get out of such a plot. Join her on this journey...

It feels good to be outside after the usual mid-winter overindulgence and I can find plenty to do on the rare fine day, but if I had the money and the room on my little patch, I would love a small greenhouse. A space to potter in not so fine days, a place to keep a few tender plants over the worst of the winter and best of all somewhere to start sowing seeds just that bit earlier.

It is really tempting when the birds start singing again and the daffodils and other spring bulbs appear, to get excited and sow things much too early. Seedlings generally fare better when they are grown in their right season, but we all try to push the boundaries, and a greenhouse or small tunnel really helps with this. I am currently using our very dilapidated conservatory to get a few things going. It isn't any use for growing things later in the year, as it is shaded by a beautiful copper beech, but the beech is leafless for the time

being and it is perfect for seed sowing and propagating. I have a very old (35-years-old) propagator and every time I plug it in, I am amazed that it still works. The thermostat no longer works so it takes a bit of managing. I have killed more than a couple of trays of seedlings by forgetting to turn it off on an unusually hot day. But I have raised thousands of seedlings with it over the years.

For now, I have restricted myself to sowing a few varieties of salad leaves and some onions and early leeks. I don't use onion sets, although I know many people find them the most convenient way to grow onions. We have onion rot in our soil, and it is very difficult or even impossible to get rid of. I have found that by sowing from seed, maybe three or four seeds to a module, and planting the little plants with their own little bit of soil, we have a reasonable chance of getting some bit of a crop. I am going to experiment



this year and spray garlic tea on the bed a few times before I plant out the onions. The theory is that the garlic will wake up the fungal spores, which will die without plants to grow on, leaving the way clear for the real onion crop. It is just a theory, but worth a try.

The other great benefit of a greenhouse or tunnel is that you can grow a wider range of crops and in my case specifically

tomatoes. It is not impossible to grow tomatoes outside but with the uncertainty of our summers it is a bit hit and miss. I have grown tomatoes outside myself and some varieties are quite successful. Some modern varieties are bred to be blight resistant but for really consistent crops, growing inside is the way to go.

I won't be sowing tomato seeds for at least another month;

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we were picking tomatoes in mid-July last year from a late February sowing. There is nothing like the taste of a home grown tomato. I can't wait.

# Planting and growing mixed hedges

Before choosing a type of hedge, you must first look at why you want the hedge and what you need it to do. After that you need to look at practical considerations like site and soil. **Mattie Keane** of Future Forests – where mixed hedging has long been a speciality – explains.

Once you figure those factors out, the bewildering choice of hedges should be very much narrowed down. We find that there are two main reasons people choose a mixed hedge over a single variety hedge; they want more seasonal interest in their hedge and they want to encourage biodiversity in the garden. We offer several mixed hedges, but our most popular mixes are:

Our wildlife fruiting hedge is made up of mostly native species such as Guelder Rose, Elder and Spindle, all of which berry and flower and are attractive to birds and pollinators. These hedges aren't just food for the birds and the bees but they also give them much-needed cover for wild animals.

The permaculture hedge is seen as a deluxe hedge where every variety in it has a human use, plants like Black Chokeberry, Barberry and Cornelian Cherry are included; some fruit can be eaten straight from the branch and some are great for

making jams and preserves. By its very nature, this hedge is also attractive to wildlife.

Our neat natural hedge is made of three varieties: Hawthorn, Fieldmaple and Hornbeam, these three blend beautifully together; this hedge also clips well, so can be kept neat if required and is also suitable to smaller gardens.

Our seaside mixed hedge is obviously specific to coastal sites and gives that informal look that is often lacking in long, single coastal hedges; plants like Cotoneaster, Rosa Rugosa and Fuchsia make us this mix.

### How far apart do I plant?

How far apart you plant each plant can vary on how tall you want to let the hedge grow; taller hedges can be given some extra space to allow them to grow tall and strong. If you want to keep the hedge at an easily maintained height, then plant them closer but, as an average, a lot of bare-root hedges are planted at either two or three plants per metre.

### How to plant?

It really is best to start with a clear run and remove the sod so that you are planting directly into soil. I usually advise to stagger the plants, which in effect gives you a double line, this staggering makes the hedge thicken out quicker. Some people plant them as they come out of the bag, but I think it is much better to plant in groups that repeat themselves down along the hedge. This way when one variety is doing its thing, be it flower, berry or autumn colour, it really stands out in the hedge. For an example

of this, start with planting eight Hawthorn, then six Hazel, then four Guelder Rose, then six Spindle, then eight Hawthorn again and so on. I certainly would try to not repeat it exactly the same down the hedge, as a slightly more random look always looks better. Quite often people will let the odd variety in the mix grow big and Crabapple amongst others is a great choice for that. The plant should always sit comfortably into the hole; never wrap the root around if it is too big, just prune the root back a bit – this actually stimulates the root rather than damaging it.

### How deep should I plant?

If you are unsure how deep to plant, the trees or hedging will have the old soil nursery mark on them from where they were recently dug. Use this mark as a guideline, and firm them in well after planting.

If you are planting a large amount of bare-root plants, do not lay them all out and start planting, take a selection, 20 to 30 or so, put them into a separate bag and start with these, making sure the main bags are tied or at least facing away from any drying wind. Never let a root go in the ground dry. Keep a bucket of water with you and if a plant is dry, dip it, shake off the excess water and plant away.

Bare-root plants in general are quite tough, so with a modicum of good care you should have no problems.

### Do I need to use compost or manure?

I quite often get asked how

much compost one should use. I feel a small bit of compost or well-rotted manure is good if the soil is poor. Organic matter helps to break up the ground and give some valuable nutrients if they are in short supply. However, I would advise against the over-use of composts or manures, if you use too much, the roots will not want to go beyond the rich compost and you could end up with less stable and small rooted trees and plants. A good top feed is better, as the nutrients will leach down through the soil, slowly feeding the plant. If you are lucky enough to have good soil, then you should not need any compost at all.

### How low should I cut the hedge?

Another common question is also how low should one cut the hedge after planting. I always advise people to prune a mixed hedge after planting, as this will stimulate bushy growth and all good hedges should be brought up slowly. If you want the hedge stock proof and especially if you have lots of natives like Hawthorn and Blackthorn, then even as low as six inches is advised. In the past, I have planted what looked like a great hedge, only to prune it to six inches and then wonder where the hedge and all the hard work had gone, have I just killed it? But most of these plants thrive on this hard pruning and they will bush lovely from there.

If you don't need a stock-proof hedge, just have a look at your plants after planting and pick what you feel is a reasonable

height and cut to that mark. The hedge will bush from just below that mark, but the average prune back is down to one to 1.5ft high. 'Being cruel to be kind' really does apply where hedging is concerned.

If there is Holly in your hedge, do not prune it as hard as the others, as it is generally slower growing.

### How to grow a great hedge?

Selecting the most suitable plants to suit your conditions and planting with care. These two factors are the basic building blocks for the success of your hedge, but bear in mind that keeping your hedge weed and competition free will determine how well your hedge will grow.

I have seen stunning differences between hedges planted at the same time where one was poorly

weeded while the other used a weed membrane and mulch and the difference in height and vigour was hard to believe. A mulch insulates the roots of the plant, retains moisture in a dry spell and importantly keeps the plants free from competition. I would never suggest the use of herbicides to keep the hedge weed-free for loads of obvious reasons. So, when thinking of planting your hedge, plan not just to plant but also to mulch the hedge as well at the same time (weed membrane optional). You and your hedge will not regret the extra work.

Future Forests will be supplying bare-root mixed hedging until the end of March, for more information see [www.futureforests.ie](http://www.futureforests.ie) or call 027 66176.

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## people Sport &amp; Fitness



## DIY FITNESS

Tania Presutti

Danish freelance journalist and fitness professional Tania Presutti, who now resides in Clonakilty, delivers a series of efficient DIY fitness exercises you can do at home.

Since I started running, I'm spending more time outdoors than I used to. I'm tempted to say, it's like being a kid again – having to go outside

## Go outdoors

regardless of the weather. If you had a childhood resembling mine, you might remember that autumn and winter could be quite challenging to go out in the cold and wet, but as soon as you started playing and moving, it all went away and you just had a good time.

Such are my runs. Regardless of the weather, I enjoy my run. My body feels strong and efficient, my mind relaxes and I feel more connected to nature and my surroundings than I would do had I spent time indoors on a treadmill.

Don't get me wrong. Gyms are nice and all the equipment they offer are great for training your physique (and I often miss visiting one), but there's a ton of difference between looking at yourself in the mirror flexing muscles (or looking at others doing the same) and going outside, feeling the air on your face, looking at trees, birds, plants, the ocean, flowers or



cows. Being outside just makes you connect and relax to life in a different way – and I love being a part of promoting the outdoors more.

If you're reading along and thinking to yourself 'that's all very well, but I'm NOT going to start running just to go outside': I get you and you don't have to run to be outside. You could go for a walk. Leave the phone and music player at

home. Just go out and breathe the fresh air, listen to the wind – and if you're in a town, a walk through town will leave you refreshed as well. Plus maybe you get to meet someone you haven't seen in a while or discover something new about the place you live.

You might also be able to find local outdoors exercise classes or ask a good friend to join you. Some of my best conversations with friends happen on walks. It's medicine for mind and body.

And if walking is too slow for you, grab a bike, a surfboard, football or swimsuit and get out in the elements. The goal is to be outside and using your body for what it was meant for: movement. It doesn't matter if it's one or the other kind.

If you're outside and want to do a little extra, here are a few exercises, which are as made for the outdoors:



1: Dips – find a bench or structure to sit on. Place hands, fingers pointing forward on the edge, slide your butt over the edge. Lower your body down towards the ground, without actually touching. Use your triceps to press yourself up again. This is a great exercise for your arms and upper back.

2. Squats and high knees. High knees might come automatically when you're stepping over puddles, sticks and stones. Squats can be done anywhere

and everywhere and will help maintaining strong legs and happy jeans.

3. Saxon side bends for abs, core and back. Stand up, legs shoulder width or more apart, arms above head. Keep hips still and lean upper body towards left, then right. Carrying something heavy in your hands, like a rock, water bottle or bag pack will make your core work even more.

I hope this February column has inspired you to go outside too. If you like more inspiration for home training sessions and exercises, I'm regularly posting training content to my Instagram account: @trainwithadane

You are as always welcome to write me at taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com with comments and questions.

Move more, be happy, enjoy life. See you next month.

## New mixed ability rugby club for West Cork

A new sports initiative is being set up in West Cork that aims to allow adults and eventually kids with disabilities to play in a rugby team with mainstream players. The organisers are hoping to reach as many local clubs as possible to get support and engagement from players, and ex-players, and encourage their participation with young adults with disabilities. So far clubs in Bantry, Dunmanway, Clonakilty have signed up to drive this to a successful West Cork Rugby Club called West Cork Jesters Rugby.

Mixed Ability is a worldwide concept led by IMAS (International Mixed Ability Sports) and began in the UK. Two men joined England's first mixed ability team, Bradford & Bingley Bumblebees. From their experience they hoped to spread the idea of Mixed Ability within the rugby scene with an aim to transfer it to other sports. Swansea Gladiators in Wales are recognised as the oldest Mixed Ability Rugby Team.

Mixed Ability Rugby is like any other. It is not a disability team, players aren't classified by barriers. It is a game open to all who want to play full contact rugby, no matter their experience, fitness, abilities etc. All team members are expected to attend trainings and encouraged to attend gym sessions. Like any other rugby team discipline, teamwork,

respect and hard work are key to the experience. Not forgetting the great social aspect for those involved!

Everyone who trains plays in a game. Mixed Ability Teams play friendly matches against local sides, juniors, veterans etc. The game is like any other rugby game – physical! As it is contact there will be injuries like any other sport. The only difference to mainstream rugby is that scrums are non-contested!

There are 26 teams registered to take part in the IMART 2020 International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament which takes place from June 7-12 in Cork and it is going to be the biggest celebration of rugby, diversity and inclusion.

During a week of games, Mixed Ability sports showcases, educational and social events, 24 Mixed Ability teams from all over the world battle for the two trophies: 'The Winners' Cup' and the 'Spirit of Mixed Ability Rugby Trophy', which is awarded to the team who best embodies World Rugby core values of integrity, passion, solidarity, discipline and respect.

If you would like to know more you can message the West Cork Jesters Rugby Facebook page, contact Nobby Dunne (trainer) on 087-6413549, or come to a training / game.

## IRONKIDS comes to Cork

IRONMAN Ireland has announced the addition of Ireland's first ever IRONKIDS event to the IRONMAN Ireland, Cork weekend taking place Saturday, June 20, 2020 in Youghal.

The popular children's event has been a staple at IRONMAN race weekends around the world, creating a festival atmosphere and providing an opportunity for children from in and around the host venues to be an active part of the race weekend. For the first time, IRONKIDS comes to Ireland as Youghal this year hosts the second edition of IRONMAN Ireland, Cork.

The event will take place the day before IRONMAN Ireland, Cork. IRONKIDS is all about participation and encouraging children towards a healthy, active lifestyle. As the emphasis is on fun and participation, every child is a winner. Each participant will receive an IRONKIDS shirt and finisher medal.

The run-only event involves multiple distances; 500m, 1000m and 1500m for children between the ages of 3 -15 years old. The routes take in the historic seaside resort town in County Cork with the Clock Gate Tower being a central focus point of



the start area.

The event will start in the vicinity of the Clock Gate Tower with all participants finishing under the iconic IRONMAN finisher arch, located at Market Square – the very same arch where the IRONMAN athletes will complete their race the next day.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Christopher O Sullivan, added "IRONMAN is a huge international sporting competition and in addition to all the benefits to the region in terms of tourism and economy it also serves as a champion of healthy lifestyle choices."

"Through a range of programmes and awareness raising events for our young people throughout the year, the Council actively promotes physical and mental health

in our communities. This addition of IRONKIDS to the IRONMAN event gives us a great opportunity to introduce our children and young people to the experience of racing, the excitement of competition and the rewards of exercise and healthy choices."

Chief Executive of Cork County Council Tim Lucey, welcoming the addition of IRONKIDS, said: "The inaugural IRONMAN Ireland, Cork event last summer welcomed competitors from all over the world, showcasing East Cork as a first class visitor destination and generating an estimated €8million boost to the local economy. It's great to see this prestigious sporting event continue to grow and this year incorporate IRONKIDS – the children's run."

"The huge success and continuing growth of the event reflects Cork County Council's infrastructural investment in the region. We are also delighted to have the council's work and its pivotal role in bringing IRONMAN to Ireland recognised with the recent short-listing of Cork County Council in the All Ireland Community and Council Awards 2020 for Best Tourism Initiative for IRONMAN Ireland."

The entry cost is €10, and each participant receives an IRONKIDS t-shirt and medal. Entries at [www.ironman.com/im-ireland-register](http://www.ironman.com/im-ireland-register). Entries are limited therefore parents are encouraged to get their children signed-up as soon as possible.



## SPORT

John Bohane

## West Cork rugby ace plays on hallowed turf of Twickenham



West Cork rugby player Danny Collins lined out on the Cambridge rugby team who defeated Oxford in the 138th Varsity rugby game, which was played in Twickenham recently. **John Bohane** catches up with the rugby ace who loved playing on the hallowed turf of Twickenham.

The Cambridge University student helped his side defeat Oxford on a full-time score of 15-0. Danny, who was introduced as a substitute, was thrilled to help his team claim a deserved victory. "It was a great win. All the team played very well. Conditions weren't great on the day. Oxford deserve a lot of credit. They had some dangerous counter attacks, but we dealt with it well. It was a sweet win," revealed the prop forward.

The Dunmanway native relished playing in the pristine surrounds of Twickenham. Danny lined out alongside a plethora of very talented players, which included a former Australia captain in James Horwill. "It was a great experience. The stadium was unbelievable. The dressing rooms were amazing. You could back a bus into the dressing room. The grass was also quality for scrummaging. It was definitely the best pitch and venue I have ever played in. Playing in the Varsity match was the highlight of my rugby career. The build up to the game was very exciting. It was a very positive experience."

The former Dunmanway RFC and UCC rugby player played an important role upon his introduction to the game. Danny helped solidify the Cambridge scrum, which ensured they secured a comfortable win. The modest prop forward was delighted to play his part in their success. "I was happy

with my performance. As long as I complete the job I'm there to do well, then I'll be happy. It was a great feeling to contribute to a huge win."

The West Cork man has made rapid progress in his rugby career in the UK. Danny only moved over to Cambridge last September. He never envisaged only three months later that he would be playing in the annual Varsity game, which is one of the most competitive fixtures on the international rugby scene. He's delighted with his rugby progress to date. "I moved to Cambridge in late September and I started my graduate studies that October. I never even thought of joining the university rugby club, never mind making the first team. It was my persistent girlfriend Carrie who enticed me to play a bit of ball. She's good at that and very supportive. She encouraged me to start playing rugby over in Cambridge. I am delighted I joined the club. It all happened very quickly. I got in contact with Scott Annett who is an amazing guy. He got me to come down to the club and get into some action with the LX team. From there, I played games with the LXs and I then got asked to join the Blues for some training in early November."

The talented prop forward has learned a lot from playing and working with international stars such as Flip Van der Merwe who played with Clermont. The lock forward also represented South Africa on six occasions. Danny has loved playing with top players. "The standard is very high and competitive. Everyone buys into the club so well here and really show their support. The front row clique are a great bunch of lads. I've learnt some great 'pushing' skills from them. All the scrum and line-out coaches are also sounds. I am learning all the time. It is a great environment to develop and progress. Hopefully

some aspects of my game will improve from working with so many top players and coaches."

Danny is balancing his academic studies and his sporting requirements perfectly so far in his new chapter in Cambridge. The 23-year-old is studying a PhD in Biology. He is loving his new life in Cambridge. "College is going well. I'm settling into PhD life nicely at The Babraham Institute. The people are so friendly and my lab group is very supportive. They're a great bunch of people to work with and I'm excited for the next four years here."

The West Cork rugby star has very good memories of his years spent playing with the various UCC rugby teams. Danny loved playing with UCC. "I have some very fond memories of my time at the Farm, which is the UCC training ground. It is a great place to play and they really brought me up through their player development system. I played for them at U20 and J1 level. I also operated as a reserve for the senior team occasionally. It was a great experience and learning curve for me. I owe a big thanks to all my previous coaches in UCC."

Danny started off his rugby career with his beloved local club Dunmanway RFC. The talented prop forward is full of praise for the role they have played in his rugby development to date. "They are a great club. There are great people involved within the club. I started off playing for them at the age of eight. I played ten years with them at underage level, before going back for one season last year with their junior team. Dunmanway is a small club in the heart of West Cork. They are always struggling for numbers, but they still manage. The people behind the scenes always do their best. I have fond memories of playing for my home town team."

## West Cork soccer star signs new contract with Cork City FC

West Cork soccer star Ronan Hurley recently signed a new contract with Cork City FC, following a very impressive campaign with the first team last year. **John Bohane** catches up with the former Bunratty United underage player who is looking forward to the SSE Airtricity League Premier Division campaign resuming on Valentine's night.



The Schull teenager, who played with all the various Cork City underage teams, first broke into the first team at the end of the 2018 season. Ronan stepped up and impressed on a consistent basis last season. He is delighted with the new contract. "I'm buzzing. I can't wait to be back training again, playing games and helping the team as much as I can. There is no better place to play in than Turner's Cross, so I'm buzzing to be back playing there again," declared the left back.

Pre-season training for the Cork City senior squad resumed on January 2. Ronan loved getting back and working with his teammates again. "We had a few running sessions during December, so we were at the right fitness coming into the start of pre-season training. It is important to get a break at the end of the season to recharge your batteries, so you're ready to go again. I had been going to the gym and doing a few running sessions to stay on top of my fitness during the off-season. It is important to hit the ground running when pre-season training resumes."

The talented West Cork soccer player is hoping to enjoy a successful league campaign with Cork City this season. Cork City begins their league campaign with a home game against Shelbourne on February, Friday 14. Ronan, who enjoyed a great debut campaign last season, is determined to push on and enjoy another successful campaign. "I can't wait for the season to start. Hopefully I can push on now this year. Last season was my first full year playing professionally, so now I feel I can step up and show what I can do. I want to play as many games as I can and improve my

game, focusing on my strengths and improving my weaknesses. My main aim is to win as many games as possible and contribute to the team as much as I can."

The soccer ace was thrilled with the success of his debut season operating as a professional. The defender cemented the left back role and he earned rave reviews for his consistent performances. "I was happy enough with how it went. Obviously the start of the season was tough for me, as the competition at left back was very high with Shane Griffin and Kevin O'Connor there, so I was struggling with game time. Around July then I got an opportunity in the team and I thought I took my chance. It was an unreal experience playing in the Europa League and also to get my first professional goal. I was a bit disappointed with how the season finished as I picked up an ankle injury which kept me out for a few games, but hopefully I can push on now again this year."

The Cork City senior team ultimately endured a disappointing league and cup campaign last season. Ronan is confident their young players will benefit from the experience they gained last year. "It was a very disappointing season. Obviously at the start of the year we were hoping to be challenging for both the league and the cup, but unfortunately that didn't happen. We knew it wasn't good enough. It wasn't where Cork City should be in the table, so hopefully this year we can get things right and get up that table. Our aim is to get Turner's Cross buzzing again. The most disappointing aspect was the Europa League game. We were the better team away and ended up winning the game, but lost on aggregate, as we lost the home game. Lots of young players made the step up to the first team, which is great. Colin Healy is the Head

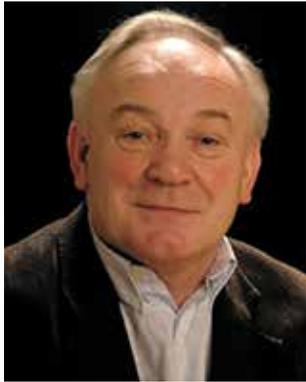
of the Academy. He knows exactly what its like to play for Cork City and what's expected of the players. Hopefully more players will make the step up this season."

Cork City appointed Neale Fenn as their new manager in the final few weeks of last season. Ronan is confident they have made a great appointment. "It is a very good appointment. He has played for Cork City before, so he knows the club inside out. He is a modern manager, who likes to play ball on the deck which I think suits my game. He came in late enough last season, so he couldn't change the whole system to what he wants. I think we'll see most of his changes this season. We've a young team this season with quality players. I'm confident we'll get up that table again."

Ronan was given his debut by the previous long-serving manager John Caulfield. Ronan will always be indebted to his former manager. "Ever since I joined Cork City for my underage career, he was the manager. He believed in me and gave me my first contract, so I'll always be grateful. He is a great manager and he showed it with the success in the league and cup with Cork City."

The star soccer player is balancing his soccer commitments with college life. Ronan is currently studying Commerce in UCC. He is thriving in both his sporting and academic careers at present. "I might miss a few lectures because of training, but most of the lecture notes are put up online so you won't miss out. Winter exams were held during the off-season, which gave me time to cram in my study. They are both going well at present."

## people Motoring

CAR  
REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

**K**orean company Kia had a great end to 2019 when their e-Soul was voted Continental Irish Car of the Year, the first time that an electric car won this prestigious award. Kia's e-Niro also did very well in the voting to make it a great year for the company, who have done really well in the Irish market over the past 20 years or so.

In 2002 Kia sold 400 cars

## Kia's Xceed offers a sporty alternative to more conventional SUVs

in Ireland and in the early days their large cars, the Sorento and Sportage, provided most of the sales. But in recent years sales have risen dramatically and several new models have been introduced including the Ceed.

Since the first Ceed was launched in 2006, the Korean marque has more than doubled its sales in Europe, fulfilling its mission statement that it could engineer and design a car that appeals to European drivers.

Two years ago, Kia wisely decided to drop the apostrophe from the name and now we get the Xceed, which is described as an urban cross-over, although at first glance you wouldn't really think that it's a cross-over.

Dropping the apostrophe was important, as nowadays people search the internet for information on cars and if you



have an apostrophe in a name, you can get inaccurate results on Google.

Last week, I drove a bright yellow-coloured version and it certainly 'stood out from the crowd' in the supermarket car park. Officially the colour is Quantum Yellow. It's based on the five-door Ceed and just slightly higher (44 cm

suspension than the regular model. But it's a new model and we are told that the only body parts carried over are the front doors.

The exterior colour is carried over in the interior with a touch of yellow on the dash, the inside of the doors and all over the seat covers.

Kia see this new model as

sporty alternative to more conventional SUVs. They expect over one thousand people to buy one this year, with 500 of those opting for the plug-in hybrid version, which is due very soon.

The boot is a decent size and you get a 'mini' spare wheel, which is much better than those dreaded repair kits. However, did find the engine a bit noisy at times.

Prices start at €26,345 for the K2 1.0-litre petrol. There will also be a 1.4-litre petrol and a 1.6-litre diesel. As usual prices rise according to the spec, while the K4 1.0-litre I drove, with a few goodies including blind spot detection will cost you €30,045. The K4 trim has the brand's first fully digital 12.3ins supervision instrument cluster. It replaces the conventional speedometer and tachometer dials with

digital dials.

The Xceed looks great, it's fun to drive and the bright yellow colour certainly attracted a few enquiries from fellow motorists and people in car parks. And, of course anybody thinking about buying Kia will always ask about its famous seven-year warranty. The Xceed is made in Zilina, Slovakia, along with the five-door Ceed, Ceed Sportwagon and ProCeed Shooting Brake.

Kia lost James Brooks, their genial MD to Opel at the end of last year, but that 'Car of the Year' win was a huge boost for the company. Meanwhile Aidan Doyle, the Head of Marketing and new MD Ronan Flood will keep the show on the road at Kia's Irish headquarters in Ballymount, Dublin.

## Don't underestimate the comfort a Kamiq will bring to your life

**A** strange connection I know, but I think that Skoda and Wayne Rooney and Coleen have something in common. The Rooneys clearly like the letter 'K' and three of their four children have Christian names beginning with a 'K'.

Now Skoda has three SUVs, all beginning with the letter 'K.' The Karoq, a Compact SUV, the Kodiaq, a Mid-size SUV and this week's test car the Kamiq, which Skoda describe as a City SUV.

Skoda certainly goes to great lengths to find new names for its cars. The name Kamiq comes from the language spoken by the Inuit people, who live in Greenland and northern Canada. Kamiq means 'something that fits as perfectly as a second skin in every situation'.

I think that's a pretty good name for such a neat, compact, comfortable car. The Kamiq is based on the same platform as the recently launched Scala hatchback, but Skoda says they have changed both chassis and suspension.

The Kamiq is taller, has more headroom, and the designers have given it the first iteration of a fresh front style for the brand. Main lights

front and rear are LED. The designers claim the longest wheelbase and the highest ground clearance in the segment.

I did a lot of urban driving last week and to be honest got a few warnings that I had exceeded the 30km/h limit. It's very easy to break that 30k limit, but with adaptive cruise control you can choose whatever limit you wish to set. In a way it was a wake-up call to see how easy is it to exceed the 30km/h limit in city driving.

My test car came in Quartz Grey Metallic, which was a very discreet colour, compared with the bright yellow Xceed I had driven the previous week. Two roof rails added to the SUV look. Space in the back seat was a big tight. One day I had three women\* in the back seat; space was tight and one of them couldn't put on her seat belt.

We are often told that a new car might be of interest to 'empty-nesters.' The entry-level price of just over 21k for the Kamiq should certainly attract the so-called 'empty-nesters,' but then we are told that very people buy entry level models, with most opting for at least a few



extras. I think you shouldn't wait to be an 'empty-nester' before you appreciate the comfort that a Kamiq will bring to your life.

Skoda is a very modern, but it still has a few old-fashioned items like a handbrake and spare wheel, which people over 49 or indeed 59 will appreciate. They still have a little clip on the windscreen for holding your parking ticket verification and a scraper for the frost is located near the fuelling point. The company used to supply a neat umbrella in the door of some models, but I haven't seen a 'brolly' in any recent Skoda cars.

Prices start at €21,300 for the 1.0-litre Active version. The 1.0 litre TSI automatic

Style version with 115 brake horse power model I drove will cost you €28,100. And if you decide that you want to avail of the plethora of extras which came with the test car, the price will be €31,920. Road tax is €200.

Skoda cars are great value and the Czech company continue to expand their range. My only complaint was the lack of the regular USB charging slot and you will need a USB-C charger for your mobile phone.

\* the three women were my wife and her two sisters.

## The Care Trust gets on the road with the all-new Renault Clio

**R**enault Ireland will partner with Irish charity The Care Trust (TCT) to supply 36 All-New Renault Clios for its series of fundraising lottery draws in 2020. Renault Ireland Brand Ambassador and Today FM Breakfast Show presenter Ian Dempsey was on hand to launch the new partnership.

The Care Trust is a non-profit organisation and a registered charity, raising much needed funds for the CRC, Rehab, and the Mater University Hospital since 1974. In 2019, The Care Trust provided €2.15 million to CRC, Rehab and the Mater Hospital from its fundraising efforts. These funds help to ensure that thousands of children and adults with physical, medical or intellectual disabilities, those who are socially disadvantaged and those requiring medical care have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The Care Trust runs three draws every month, and an All-New Renault Clio must be won in every draw.

In the 30 years since the iconic supermini first went on sale, Clio has become Renault's best-selling model worldwide, with 15 million Clios finding homes. The fifth generation of Clio arrived with a totally refreshed exterior styling

combined with revolutionary interior design, and sets new standards for quality, technology and practicality. It's also one of the safest cars in its class, as highlighted by its five-star EuroNCAP rating.

Conor Dixon, Renault Ireland: "We're delighted to partner with The Care Trust, which does such fantastic work through its beneficiaries at the CRC, Rehab and the Mater Hospital. We wish all 36 lucky winners safe and happy driving in their All-New Renault Clios!"

Senan Mullins, Chief Executive, The Care Trust: "We are very grateful to Renault Ireland for their tremendous support and goodwill and we are looking forward to a great partnership which will offer our contributors the chance, well 36 chances this year in fact, to win an All-New Renault Clio, along with cash prizes in every draw. The Care Trust has been fundraising since 1974, thanks to our generous and loyal contributors, from all over the country, who make a huge difference to the lives of children and adults in Ireland who depend on the fantastic services provided by CRC, Rehab and the Mater University Hospital".

www.renault.ie / www.thecaretrust.ie