

# Maynooth Newsletter



*Recording the Social Footprint of Maynooth since the 1970s*



## Local News - December 2023 - Issue No. 530 - Online Version

This publication is produced by Maynooth Community Employment Project, supported by the Department of Social Protection, which is funded by the Irish Government.  
*The views & opinions expressed in this Publication are those of the contributors.*



### *Shop Local, Eat Local, Spend Local & Enjoy Local in Maynooth this Christmas 2023 Keep your Business in Maynooth to Keep Maynooth in Business*

Christmas, the season of giving and receiving is upon us once again. This is the perfect opportunity to support our local shops and businesses in Maynooth. Small in size but huge in character, Maynooth comes alive with Festive atmosphere for Christmas. This beautiful town is packed full of specialised shops, pretty boutiques and a variety of restaurants and cosy cafés where you can drop in for a hot chocolate to warm chilly fingers. You will find exceptional value for money is to be had in the smaller local shops where you get a more personalised service and friendly atmosphere. Lets buy our Christmas presents from our local businesses and self-employed people. If the goal is for money to flow back into the local economy, we must commit to choosing wisely. Driving an hour out of our town or shopping online does not contribute to the community we live in.

Maynooth is a lively town with plenty of heart – many would say it has more going for it than other places on the commuter belt. It's also a pretty place with family-friendly housing, canal side walks, and a main street that hasn't been hollowed out by retail parks. There is ample car parking in Maynooth, customers can park (check parking fees and time allocated) while shopping in Carton Retail Park, Manor Mills, Glenroyal, Greenfield and Beaufield Shopping Centres. There is also ample customer car parking in the Aldi and Lidl stores. Pay Parking is also available within the town enabling customers to enjoy the many retail shops, pubs and restaurants in and around the Town.

Maynooth is the “**Gastronomic Capital of Kildare**”. There are vast amounts of establishments in town that offer the most sophisticated cuisine and the most appealing food and beverages. Maynooth is also a “**Purple Flag**” “destination” “for a good night out, vibrant and well managed”. Stay local this year and take the stress out of shopping, avoid the cost of travel and expensive parking fees. When all the shopping is done there is a multitude of restaurants, bars and coffee shops to visit and enjoy the gastronomic delights and Festive atmosphere of Maynooth. Christmas Shopping is important to small-town retailers. It's a great opportunity to focus on your own business and give your customers a pleasant experience. Retailers need to say, “**Stay in Maynooth**”, we have lots to offer. Support our community, our businesses, our schools, our organisations. Everyone working together will continue to make Maynooth a great place to live in.



The Maynooth Christmas Lights were turned on Sunday 26th November with Santa flying in specially from the North Pole. A huge “Thank You” must go to Mark Nolan and his crew for organising the event.

*Spend where you live, support what you love, choose local!!!*





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The opinions and statements expressed in the articles are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board. All materials to be included in the next edition of the Newsletter should be sent by e-mail or addressed to:

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## Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor, for publication, should be sent by e-mail to: [editor@maynoothcep.com](mailto:editor@maynoothcep.com)

## Mission Statement

The Maynooth Newsletter is a community focused publication available free to the people of Maynooth. It plays an important role in gathering together, recording and distributing community based news. We encourage all groups and individuals in the community to submit material to let us know about their activities and any upcoming events. The Newsletter exists for your enjoyment and we hope you continue to enjoy your monthly read and keep us informed of your activities.

The Editorial Board endeavours to ensure independence and balance in the Newsletter content and reserves the right to omit/edit or abridge material which in its opinion might render the Newsletter as a promoter of sectional interests. In addition we undertake the following:

- In the case of errors of fact we will publish corrections when we become aware of such.
- In the case of unwittingly or unfairly impugning the reputation of any person we hereby offer that person the right to reply.

Any contributor seeking further guidelines in this matter is invited to contact the Editorial Board.

Copy date for receipt of articles is published in the Newsletter. We must stress that material submitted after the copy date cannot be accepted.

## Maynooth Newsletter Archives

The management and staff of the Maynooth Community Employment Project started a project in March 2011 to acquire and digitise all available issues of the Maynooth Newsletter dating back to 1975. These back issues along with current issues are available by following the archive link on our webpage - [www.maynoothcep.com](http://www.maynoothcep.com).

The Newsletter Archive can be viewed and searched in pdf format. In addition, there exists the capability to be able to search an entire year. Please be aware the single files associated with the year are larger and will take a little longer to load. The Archive provides an important historical footprint of the Town and records the community profile of Maynooth from the mid-seventies to the present day. We hope you enjoy using it and that it brings back memories of people, places and times and that it equally provides an interesting insight to the development of the town and university for newly arrived members of our community.

## Disclaimer

While every care has been taken to display accurate information, Maynooth Newsletter will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of any inaccuracy or error within.

**All information should be verified from an independent source.**

**Editorial Board - Maynooth Newsletter**

## Editorial

With the Christmas lights switched on in Main Street at the end of November, it is hard (even if you wanted to) not feel the arrival of the festive season. Again, this year there are more lights added, so Maynooth now has an impressive festival light display on par with any other town. Led by Mark Nolan the Christmas lights committee, focus on delivering the festive cheer to Maynooth every year. Not alone do they fundraise for the cost of the lights they also have to arrange and manage the putting up of the lights which is no mean feat considering the traffic levels in Maynooth. It was great to see the large number of local people present for the official turning on ceremony. Like the St. Patrick's Day Parade committee who focus on the annual event in March, the Christmas Lights committee deliver Christmas. For events like these you need independent committees who focus on the task and are prepared to give significant voluntary commitment to fund-raise and manage logistics to deliver such successful outcomes for the town.

Again, this year the Maynooth Tidy Towns Christmas tree is also in place in the town square and it adds to the sense of the season having a real tree in the centre of the town, so well done to them for this. There was a big cheer from the crowd when the lights on the tree was switched on. It was good to see that for the first time in a number of years that Maynooth Tidy Towns held their annual end of year celebration event sponsored by the Glenroyal Hotel. In particular it was good to see some longstanding member volunteers being recognised for their active involvement in the work of tidy towns. Mattie and Liz Callaghan and Moira Baxter were members of Maynooth Tidy Towns when I got involved back in 1992 and have continued with the group. Marian Cawley was also recognised for her work for tidy towns which involves litter picking seven days a week.



The official opening by the Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley T.D. of the two new post-primary school buildings on the Maynooth Education Campus took place recently. The delivery of these schools was not without difficulties with the building completions delayed because of the need to seek a second contractor to complete the works. The new school buildings have given the students in Maynooth a first-class educational facility which includes a sports complex and I am sure that many other schools look with envy at the facilities available to students in these schools.



**Minister Foley speaking at the opening of the new Maynooth Education Campus schools watched by Johnny Nevin, Principal, Maynooth Post-Primary and student Hugh Phillips.**

We also welcome the official opening of Gaelscoil Ruairí and while they are still in their temporary building, they have now also opened a special class for children with autism. The provision of another primary school special class is particularly important as Maynooth develops as an autism friendly town.

As we end what seems like a very short 2023 to at least some of us, we look forward to 2024 with a positive attitude and enthusiasm. Of course, some readers will have to deal with personal challenges and Christmas may be far from your thoughts. Be assured that if you need support at this time, you should seek it, as no matter what the issue is sharing with others will help. For those spending your first Christmas in Maynooth we hope that it will get out and meet people in the town and that it will feel like home for you. More than anything else be caring and considerate to each other at this time of year.

**Paul Croghan - Editor**

**Copy date for the February edition will be 5pm on Monday 29th January 2024**



## Maynooth Senior Citizens Committee



Since our last piece in the Newsletter, the committee organized a very successful fundraising quiz night in the Newtown Inn. We would like to thank all involved who made it so. Thanks to Garry Bermingham, Chair of the Committee who pulled it all together. Thanks to committee members who helped out on the night and to Rose Bermingham for all the phone calls. We could not have done it without the help of Paul Daly (Quiz master and question setter), Elaine Bean, Melanie Oliver, Eithne Bean and Catherine Heslin were our excellent enumerators. Thanks to the Ray Murray and the Newtown Inn staff for the venue and for their help with the set up and for securing some raffle prizes. Speaking of prizes, we had a lot, thanks to the generosity of local businesses in Maynooth. The response was amazing as you will see from the list. Last but not least thanks to all who took part in the quiz to make it such a fun night.

Our next event is the Christmas Lunch taking place on December 3rd in the Springfield Hotel which we are sure will be an very enjoyable afternoon. This is a great social occasion for our senior citizens and a nice way to end the year. Our last club meeting will be on Thursday 14th December and we re-open the club on Thursday 8th January 2024.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and may 2024 bring good tidings to everyone.



Susan Durack - PRO  
Maynooth Senior Citizens Committee.  
E-mail: maynoothseniorcitizens@gmail.com

## Maynooth Senior Citizens Committee Fundraising Quiz night Newtown Inn, Friday 10 November 2023

### Sponsor List

Alainn Beauty, Allure, Atelier M, Avenue Restaurant, Barberstown Castle, Barretts, Barry Powderly Solicitors, Beetroot, Bistro 53, Blooming You, Blue Ribbon Hairdressers, Boston Barber, Boyne Dental, Brady's Clockhouse, Brid Feeley, CarePlus Pharmacy, Camille, Carraig Donn, Carton Dental, Carton House Hotel, Cherri Hand and Foot SPA, Coonans, Dawsons Menswear, Delhi Barbar, Divine Boutique, Donovans (Centra), Dunnes Stores, Elite Confectionery, Ely Wine Shop, Emma's Place, Farrelly & Southern, Finess Movement, Flowers by Sue, Glass Doll, Glenroyal Hotel, Hickey's Pharmacy, La La Lara, Life Credit Union, Mahers Centra, Manor Mills S.C., Mark Nolan Taxy, Masterson's Fruit and Veg, Maurice Cowhey, Maynooth Access Group, Maynooth Bookshop, Maynooth Dresses, Maynooth Florist, Maynooth Jewellers, Maynooth Office Supplies, Maynooth Post Office, Moulin Rouge, My Vet, McCartan's Pharmacy, McCormack's Pharmacy, McDonalds, Maynooth Florist, Naked Piazza, Newtown Inn, Newtown Pharmacy, N.C.S Auto, News 4 U, OB1 Salon, O'Briens Manor Mills, O'Neills, Picaderos, Paddy the Turk Barber, Red Torch Ginger, Redz Barber, Richies Barber, The Roost, Sásta on the River, Sean and Angie Tracey, Shade, Sherry Fitzgerald, Spar Newtown, Stone Haven, St. Patrick's Pharmacy, Supervalu, Sweet Pea Kids Boutique, Three Pin Electric, Tommy's Butcher, Upstairs Downstairs, VIP@Tesco, Yeah Burger, Zambrero, Zeba Hairdressers.

## Irish author Paul Lynch wins Booker Prize 2023

On Sunday 26th November 2023, one of the world's most prestigious literary award ceremonies took place in London. This year, the award was given to Irish novelist Paul Lynch for his novel Prophet Song. This is not just a triumph for Irish writing, but a particular triumph for this community, since the novel was largely written here in Maynooth while Paul was writer in residence at the university (2018-2029).

Paul Lynch is back in Maynooth this academic year, supported by the Arts Council, teaching a module on creativity and novel-writing as part of the Maynooth MA in Creative Writing.

Prophet Song is a beautiful but terrifying novel about a version of Ireland that drifts into authoritarianism, familiar freedoms slowly chipped away. It is about a mother's struggle to keep her family together while the world around her falls apart. It is about a Dublin that has become a war zone and it is also about how hard it is to simply run away from a familiar life even when running away might seem the obvious and necessary thing to do. It is a timely story that encourages a spirit of radical empathy with all those who are displaced by tyranny and conflict.

Some weeks ago, Paul Lynch gave a well-attended talk at the library on Main Street. In addition to being a novelist of rare sensitivity and descriptive power, he has always gone out of his way to reach out and communicate directly with his readers. He is a remarkable narrator of his own work. Meanwhile, the global significance of this year's Booker Award is something that the whole Maynooth community can take some pride in.



Paul Lynch, author of "Prophet Song", accepts the 2023 Booker Prize at the Winner Ceremony at Old Billingsgate in London on Sunday. ( Photo: Shutterstock)



# Online Office

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- \* Health Issues
- \* Social Welfare
- \* Education
- \* Services for Senior Citizens
- \* Housing Support and Grants (Windows/ Doors, Insulation, Roofing, Electrical)
- \* Housing Adaptations and Planning (Level Access Showers, Extensions, Rebuilding Ireland Housing Loan)
- \* Social Housing
- \* Estate Issues
- \* Community Issues
- \* Environmental Concerns
- \* Employment Concerns
- \* Covid - 19 related queries

**"Wishing you all  
a Merry  
Christmas &  
a Happy New  
Year"**



**Phone**



**E-mail**



**Cllr. Angela Feeney**

**Tel. 087 238 1962**

**Email. [angelafeeney@gmail.com](mailto:angelafeeney@gmail.com)**

**Stay safe everyone.**





Ollscoil Mhá Nuad  
Maynooth University

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# arts & Minds

FESTIVAL

**2024**



**Maynooth University**  
National University of Ireland Maynooth



**Seasons greetings to all from the MU Arts and Minds Festival Team.**

**Join us in May for a wonderful variety of music, Irish-language and literary events.**

**Save the Dates and unwrap your festival of culture.**

[mu.ie/artsandmindsfestival](http://mu.ie/artsandmindsfestival)



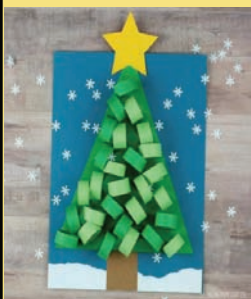
## *How to make your own personal Christmas Cards*

Christmas cards are one of the oldest traditions of the season. Making your own cards is a more personal and special manner to express your Christmas wishes and greetings. Beyond the individualized aspect of making your own Christmas cards, it can also be a useful activity to occupy children and even a way to save money. Whatever your motive, receiving a Christmas card that you have made is sure to make anyone happy and prove a memento they'll likely keep for a long time.

### **Sketch a basic design.**

If you have a good idea of how you want your card to look, it will be easier to gather the proper supplies and simplify the process of making the cards. Consider a variety of design aspects from color to motif and message and whether each element matches the others.

There are many different Christmas motifs for your card. For example, you could use a Santa or Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer design for children. For adults, you could have a Christmas tree or dangling ornaments, or even a simple message such as "Season's Greetings" or "Noel." There are also many different Christmas messages you can write in the card. Perhaps you want to use something traditional and simple such as "Wishing You a Merry Christmas," or maybe you want to write a personal message in each card. Another option is matching your motif and your message. For example, if you want to use stockings hung by a chimney for your motif, you could write "The Stockings Were Hung..."



**Choose and buy paper and envelopes for your cards.** Once you have a developed idea for your card, including format and a basic design sketch, choose the paper you want to use. There are many different options of paper type and color from. Don't forget to buy envelopes, either, as you'll need something in which to send the cards!

If you're going to make a photograph card, use cardstock so that holds the weight of the picture. Scrapbooking paper is also a high quality paper that is not as heavy as cardstock. Even though it's called scrapbooking, you can also use it to make Christmas cards. You might notice that cardstock and sometimes scrapbooking paper is pre-folded. At this stage, you can also decide if you want your card to have a portrait (up and down) or landscape (side to side) orientation.

**Purchase supplies and decorations.** You'll need various supplies, including glue and

scissors, as well as decorations such as glitter, ribbons, and stickers to make your cards. Having a well-stocked selection of supplies and decorations is useful in case you make mistakes or need to change the design.

You'll need the following supplies to make your card: glue, tape, scissors, pens for writing your message, and a ruler. Use clear glue and clear tape for the best results.

There is a large variety of possible decorations you can use. Some examples include: ribbons, Christmas motif stickers, stick on letters, and glitter.

**Do a test run.** Make one card using your basic design sketch.

Doing this will let you see if everything matches and approximately what size writing must be as well as the best placement for your decorations.

**Write out your messages on the card.** You can either hand write or print out whatever messages you've chosen for the inside and front of your card.

Use a ruler to guide your writing and assure that it is straight.

If you have a message for the front of the card, or if it is only one page, write it and make sure to leave enough room for your decorations. For example, if you decided to write "The Stockings Were Hung..." and add some stocking stickers, you'll need to make sure you have enough space to hang your stockings on the card. Likewise, if you're using a photograph on the front of your card and want to include a message, make sure there is plenty of space for both, or tailor the size of your written message to accommodate the picture. If you don't have the neatest or most beautiful handwriting, print out your message either from a design you like on the internet or one you generate in a Word program on your computer.

Write your message on the inside of the card after you've finished the front. Make sure to sign your name, and those of your family members if you like.

Make to allow enough time for pens or glue to dry before you start decorating the card.

**Decorate your cards.** Now comes the fun part! Once you've written your messages on the front and inside the card, you're ready to embellish it with decorations. Have your decorations readily available as you work. You might also want to have orange sticks or cotton swabs to fix any mistakes. If you run out of decorations, improvise with other decorative supplies, including your paper, if necessary.

**Allow cards to set.** Before you place your handcrafted Christmas cards in their envelopes to send, allow them to set overnight to make sure that any adhesives don't shift.

Source: [www.wikihow.com/Make-Christmas-Cards](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Christmas-Cards)







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***Wishing Everyone a Happy Christmas  
& Best Wishes for the New Year.***

**Great Food Served 7 Days**





## Cllr. Angela Feeney Maynooth Labour News

E mail: [angelaemfeeney@gmail.com](mailto:angelaemfeeney@gmail.com) - Phone: 0872381962



### Cllr Feeney calls for 'No Entry' and 'No Parking' signs at the Harbour Field:

At the November Municipal District Council meeting, Cllr. Feeney explained the reason for her motion. She said that when the car park on Leinster Street was closed overnight resulting in a loss of car parking spaces, many motorists parked their cars on the Harbour Field. Cllr. Feeney said that the Harbour Field is not at all intended for car parking and this is why she submitted the motion calling for signage to this effect to be put in place.

Cllr. Feeney believes that if the issue is not tackled immediately, that this leisure amenity for families, walkers and cyclists, would be destroyed. It would also make the area unsafe as it is so near the children's playground and most importantly could potentially obstruct the emergency services that use the access route on the Harbour Field provided for this sole purpose. Cllr. Feeney welcomed the response from the Council when it agreed to put the appropriate signage in place and for the collapsible bollards to be used at all times on the emergency services access route.

### Yellow box at Pound Lane is to be reinstated.

Cllr. Feeney asked the Council to reinstate the yellow box at the end of Pound Lane onto Mill Street. In speaking to the motion, Cllr. Feeney said that Main Street and Mill Street are very busy at all times and it is very difficult for anyone trying to access Mill Street from Pound Lane. It is also currently very dangerous and she has seen first hand some near misses as motorists take a chance to exit the Lane and often at speed. There are many children walking to and from the local schools and it is an issue of safety. Cllr. Feeney's motion called for the yellow box that used to be at this location, to be reinstated. The Council agreed to do this and the district engineer said he will arrange for this to happen.

### Footpath between Brookfield Park and the Meadowbrook Road

Cllr. Feeney said that the footpath in Brookfield Park ends abruptly at the end of the cul de sac forcing residents out on to the road to reach the Meadowbrook Road footpath. She added that there is no dip in the footpath directly opposite for residents to cross over and it is becoming increasingly dangerous with the increased levels of traffic. There are quite a number of young children living in Brookfield Park and the residents have concerns because of this. While the Council informed Cllr. Feeney that currently it has no plan to install a footpath there, it was agreed to add it for consideration in future footpath works in the Municipal District. Cllr. Feeney will also follow up with the Active Travel Team in the Council for assistance.

### Primary Care Centre

Cllr. Feeney said at the meeting that the need for a Primary Care Centre for Maynooth is yet another key issue for our community. With a growing population, there is a lack of available GP services and associated medical services. She said many residents are in touch with her because they have to travel miles to other counties to get access to services, and that situation is set to become even more acute as the population grows further and more people move into the area. Cllr. Feeney said the response to her question is disappointing; to hear that the Council has received no update from the HSE on the planned provision of a Primary Care Centre for Maynooth. Cllr. Feeney said she will continue to raise the issue with the relevant stakeholders such as the HSE and the Department. She was pleased to be told at the meeting by the Director and area manager that a meeting will be arranged with the HSE for an update on the matter.

### Oscailt Oifigiúil Gaelscoil Rúairí

Bhí Cllr. Feeney lán sásta freastal ar Oscailt Oifigiúil Gaelscoil Rúairí Má Nuad an seachtain seo chaite. Lá iontach a bhí ann do foireann na scoile

go léir. Maith sibh agus go n-éirí go geal libh.

### Official Opening of Maynooth Education Campus

Cllr. Feeney was delighted to attend the official opening of Maynooth Education Campus on November 8th by the Minister for Education. It was a wonderful occasion and Cllr. Feeney said that, as a past pupil of Maynooth Post Primary School and former member of the Board of Management, she is delighted to see the growth of the campus, with state of the art facilities. Congratulations to all who worked so hard to bring the project to fruition.

### Funding for Climate Action projects.

Kildare County Council will open its Community Climate Action Programme fund in December to support communities to build low carbon communities and engage in climate action projects. Co. Kildare has been allocated €897,000 for projects that range from small, medium to large scale. Once the fund opens, applicants will have 12 weeks to get their applications submitted.

Examples of some potential projects include community gardens, dispersed orchards, pocket forests, encouraging active travel, food waste projects, retrofitting community buildings, rewilding and biodiversity projects, repair cafes and swap shops.

Further information from the Community Climate Action Officer at Kildare County Council, Victoria Kavanagh on 0874759946 or by email [vkavanagh@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:vkavanagh@kildarecoco.ie)

### Meetings attended by Cllr. Feeney since her last newsletter:

November 3rd: Joint Policing Committee, 9:00 a.m. Áras Chill Dara  
November 3rd: Municipal District Council Meeting, 10:00 a.m. Áras Chill Dara  
November 7th: Launch of Brigid1500, 5:00 p.m. in Barberstown Castle  
November 9th: KCC Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m. (online)  
November 9th: BOM meeting at Coláiste Chiaráin, 7:30 p.m. (online)  
November 13th, KCC Budget 2024 Briefing, 3:00 p.m. (online)  
November 15th, BOM meeting at Coláiste Chiaráin, 7:30 p.m. (online)  
November 16th, KCC Strategic Policy Committee, 3:00 p.m. (online)  
November 20th, KCC Annual Budget Meeting, 3:00 p.m. Áras Chill Dara  
November 21st, Co. Kildare Access Network meeting, 10:00 a.m. (online)  
November 22nd, KCC LACAP update, 2:00 p.m. (online)  
November 27th, KCC Capital Budget Briefing, 10:00 a.m. Áras Chill Dara  
November 27th, Council Plenary meeting, 3:00 p.m. Áras Chill Dara

### Cllr. Feeney's upcoming Motions and Questions for Council Meetings:

#### Questions:

Can the Council provide an update outlining what affordable housing schemes are planned for the municipal district?

Can the Council provide an update on the status of the planned footpath repairs for Main Street, Maynooth?

#### Motions:

That the Council prepares a plan for the vacated fire brigade and council yard in tandem with the Harbourfield area to create a community hub for Maynooth.

That the Council carry out a speed safety review in the Moyglare Village Estate, Maynooth.



Memory from the Archives - December 1991

Ten Ways To Survive Christmas

1. Don't drink. Let me rephrase that - don't drink that goddamn awful alcohol free lager. There's enough 'no-alcohol' in five pints of that stuff to wreck your stomach for life. It has been scientifically proven that the 'no-alcohol' lager your head is as clear as a whistle but your guts feel like a pound of raw mince in a food mixer. You have been warned.
2. This Christmas sexual harassment at the office party is out. The Judge Thomas case has brought the whole thing out in the open to such an extent that an unsolicited pinch on the bum is likely to be met with an unsolicited punch on the jaw. So girls, keep your hands to yourselves or suffer the consequences.
3. Avoid relations - of the family kind. Mental breakdowns reach a peak at Christmas time and it all has to do with being cooped up in the house with snobby sister-in-law, boring uncles and armies of marauding kids intent on replaying Desert Storm in the front room. They'll drink your whiskey and smoke your cigars and sometimes the adults are even worse.
4. Drinking and driving is not funny so use public transport. And getting the old train out from Connolly can lead to all sorts of adventures. Like last Christmas Eve after the office party I caught the Sligo train at 6.30pm, settled down for a little snooze and woke up at 9.35pm in Collooney. Luckily I was able to hitch a ride back to Maynooth with Santa Claus on his sleigh and arrived back to Maynooth at 5.30am on Christmas morning. At least that's my story and I'm sticking to it.
5. Remove some vital component from the TV very early on Christmas morning. This is guaranteed to give you a few day's relative peace and you won't have to watch "Murder on the Orient Express" for the eighth time, "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" for the seventeenth time and RTE's Christmas Special for the first time. This year it is rumoured to feature Hal Roach and Daniel O'Donnell though there may be some comedians and singers performing as well.
6. In the quiet days after Christmas take some long walks. Around Maynooth there are some seldom trodden paths which are well worth exploring - Kingsbry to the pub, Cluain Aoibhinn to the pub, Greenfields to the pub, Moyglare Village to the pub, Railpark to the pub.
7. Socks for men, silky black underwear for women. Anyway I always find it useful to have a simple list when going Christmas shopping. That way you avoid confusion and you can buy all your presents in one or two shops. Make sure to label your presents clearly. Unfortunately, last year some slight confusion arose in the distribution of my presents and Uncle Jim hasn't been the same man since.
8. Three days before Christmas carefully assemble all your credit cards, Bank link cards, Pass cards etc. and systematically cut them into little pieces. That way you will have an interesting jigsaw to play with over Christmas and, as a bonus, you'll save yourself from going bankrupt.
9. Don't presume you should be having a good time. That's not what Christmas is all about. But in the old days people made their own entertainment at Christmas. Sitting around the cosy turf fire they played cards, told stories and bored each other to death. Of an evening they would sit around the wireless and a special treat on Christmas night they might even turn it on.
10. Finally, and most important, some special advice if you happen to meet Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. First of all, do not offer him a bottle of stout and a mince pie. By the time he gets to Maynooth he will be completely flustered and is likely to have eaten several thousand mince pies. He may, however, accept a glass of Andrew's Liver Salts. This year there have been strong rumours that Santa may retire and indeed a few weeks ago he survived a 'no-confidence' vote in Toyland at the North Pole when 22 very bold elves voted against him. All that is behind him now but it still might be best not to mention the word 'retirement'.



## December Update from MAFT

### Hangouts Club

Our hangouts club was launched and was a great success.

Truly fantastic to see these young people make friends, share interests, laugh and feel comfortable being themselves. The parents also enjoyed meeting for a chat over a cuppa.

See our socials for details on the next event and how to register



Hangout Clubs

"My daughter met her 'tribe' in Hangout Maynooth."

"They all were like-minded and I think a little surprised to recognise that."

### AGM

The AGM for Maynooth Autism Friendly Town will be held on the 6th of December @ 8:15pm in Room 58 Maynooth Community College, Mariavilla, Moyglare Road Maynooth

All committee nominations and motions must be emailed to MAFT mailbox: [autismfriendlytownmaynooth@gmail.com](mailto:autismfriendlytownmaynooth@gmail.com) by Friday the 1st December @ 5pm

Any proposed motion and/or nominations for chairperson, vice-chairperson or secretary require a proposer and seconder who must be in attendance at the AGM

### Social Meet-Up for Autistic Adults (18+)

The first Social Meet up for Autistic Adults was launched on Tuesday the 28th of November in O'Neills Bar

This is a place to share special interests and experiences, to relax and have fun.

Cards, Board Games, Lego, Chess, Drafts and more will be provided for optional use.

Check out Facebook and Instagram for details of more upcoming events.

### Autism Friendly Christmas Events

Be sure to visit our Facebook page for details on this year's Autism Friendly Christmas events, along with a link to the ASIAm site showcasing all available events.

For updates on these exciting programs and to stay connected with the MAFT Association, keep an eye on our newsletter and our Social Media. We look forward to welcoming you and your family to our upcoming events!



Contact us on our social media or email [autismfriendlytownmaynooth@gmail.com](mailto:autismfriendlytownmaynooth@gmail.com)

Kildare Planning Applications for Maynooth Area

Planning Applications received from 27/10/2023 to 27/11/2023 Information from Kildare County Council Website

App #	Authority	Applicant Name	Development Address	App Date
2360384	Kildare County Council	Terry and Sarah Fahey	18 Woodlands, Collegeland, Maynooth, Co. Kildare	16/11/2023
2360362	Kildare County Council	Jackie Collins	No. 6 Leinster Wood, Carton Demesne, Maynooth, Co. Kildare	07/11/2023



## Minister Josepha Madigan Officially Opens Gaelscoil Ruairí, Maynooth Gaelscoil in Kildare is officially opened with new special class for autism

The Minister for Special Education and Inclusion, Josepha Madigan TD, has officially opened Gaelscoil Ruairí in Maynooth (Friday 24 November 2023). Gaelscoil Ruairí is a multi-denominational gaelscoil under the patronage of An Foras Pátrúnachta. This year Gaelscoil Ruairí opened a new special class for autism, with an outdoor soft play area, so that students with special educational needs can undertake their Irish-medium education in the school. Speaking at the opening, Minister Madigan said: “As Minister for Special Education and Inclusion, it’s fantastic to be here in Maynooth today to officially open Gaelscoil Ruairí and its special class, which will play a key role in delivering inclusive education in the area.

“Gaelscoil Ruairí is an exemplar of inclusivity and a credit to all the community here who helped bring it to fruition. I want to commend Caoimhín Ó hEaghra and An Foras Pátrúnachta, Chairperson Damhnait Uí Ruairc and the Board of Management, Principal Ní Chinnsealaigh and the school staff, as well as the parents themselves, for working together to establish this school and open a special class. It means that children in the area, including those with special educational needs, can enjoy an education with their peers through the medium of Irish. “I wish you all the very best of success in the months and years to come, as you embark on this new chapter in your education together at Gaelscoil Ruairí. May you make very many happy memories together here.”

Póla Ní Chinnsealaigh, Principal of Gaelscoil Ruairí said: "We are delighted to officially open Gaelscoil Ruairí today. This is the result of 5 years of hard work by parents, staff, Board of Management and our patron An Foras Pátrúnachta. “It is really encouraging that the Irish language is so popular in this area, and that the children’s parents/guardians have chosen Irish-Medium education for their children. We look forward to welcoming many new families into our wonderful new school for many years to come.”

Caoimhín Ó hEaghra, General Secretary of An Foras Pátrúnachta, said: “Demand for places in gaelscoileanna has never been greater. Gaelscoil Ruairí caters for the growth in Irish-medium education locally. Parents are aware more than ever of the extra benefits immersion education provides and we are delighted to provide that choice here in Maynooth, one of a small number of areas where you can access Irish-medium education from pre-school through to university. “As the largest patron of Irish-medium schools, we are delighted to have begun this new chapter in Gaelscoil Ruairí. An Foras Pátrúnachta schools are educating 17,000 students per annum and our schools are open to everyone.

Our aim is to provide an excellent education through the Irish language to every child in Ireland who wants it.” The gaelscoil is currently based at a temporary facility on the grounds of Maynooth Education Campus, with planning permission approved for the permanent building nearby which is expected to progress to tender in mid-2024. The school looks forward to the construction of the permanent building so that it can continue to grow to provide education to incoming students from the area. Pupils from each class performed at the official opening before Minister Madigan was treated to a tour of the school building, taking in the classrooms, play areas and special class which consists of a fully equipped classroom and sensory room.

*Photographer copyright: Sinéad Mc Monagle*



Congratulations to Gaelscoil Ruairí Maynooth for its official opening.



The Minister for Special Education and Inclusion, Josepha Madigan TD, officially opens Gaelscoil Ruairí in Maynooth. Pictured with Póla Ní Chinnsealaigh, Principal Gaelscoil Ruairí, Damhnait Ó Ruairc, Chairperson of the Board of Management and Cormac Mc Cashin, Fóras Pátrúnachta



Pictured at the official opening of Gaelscoil Ruairí, Maynooth, (l) Póla Ní Chinnsealaigh, Principal Gaelscoil Ruairí, (r) Minister for Special Education and Inclusion, Josepha Madigan TD and members of Comhairle na Daltaí (students council).



Gaelscoil Ruairí, Maynooth was officially opened on Friday 24 November 2023. The school team is pictured here with students at the official opening.



Rang a trí/third class students perform at the official opening of Gaelscoil Ruairí, Maynooth on Friday 24 November 2023.



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

*Citizens Information Centre, Dublin Road, Maynooth*

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

*Information is also available online at [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) and from the*

*Citizens Information Phone Service - 0761 07 4000 or Lo-call 1890777121*



## Long-term Carers Contributions

### What are Long-Term Carers Contributions?

From January 2024, a new Long-term Carers Contribution scheme will be introduced. Under the scheme, if you have been a full-time carer for at least 20 years (1040 weeks), you can get Long-Term Carers Contributions to help you qualify for the State Pension (Contributory).

A Long-Term Carers Contribution is the same as a paid contribution on your PRSI record for each week that you provide full-time care. The contribution makes it easier for a carer to qualify for the State Pension Contributory when they reach pension age.

Legislation setting out the full detail of the scheme is not yet published. This page will be updated as more information becomes available.

### How to qualify

To qualify, you must:

- Have lived in Ireland when you were providing the care.
- Have been over 16 years and under pension age when you provided care
- Not have been in employment, self-employment, voluntary work, training or education courses for more than 18.5 hours a week.
- Not have been getting a weekly social welfare payment when you were caring, except for Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, Domiciliary Care Allowance or Carer's Support Grant.
- Have lived with the person you were caring for and provided full-time care and attention. In some circumstances, you may qualify if you did not live with the person being cared for, but you provided full-time care and attention.

### What is full-time care?

To get a Long-Term Carers Contribution, you must be providing full-time care to a person who needs full-time care.

A person is seen as needing full-time care when:

- They need continual supervision to avoid danger to themselves, or
- They need continual supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day with normal bodily functions. For example, help to walk and get about, eat or drink, get washed or dressed.

The person being cared for must have the nature and extent of their disability certified by a doctor.

### How do I use Long-Term Carers Contributions to qualify for the State Pension (Contributory)?

To get a State Pension (Contributory) you must have a certain number of paid contributions. The number of contributions also determines your rate of pension. Once you have reached 20 years (1040 weeks) of providing full-time care, you can include Long-Term Carers Contributions in the calculation of your State Pension (Contributory).

### How to apply

You can apply for Long-Term Carers Contributions online at [MyWelfare.ie](http://MyWelfare.ie). You must have a verified MyGovID account to apply using [MyWelfare.ie](http://MyWelfare.ie).

If you cannot apply online, you can contact Pension Caring Supports in the Department of Social Protection to ask for a paper application form.

### Contact details

Department of Social Protection  
Pension Caring Supports  
McCarter's Road,  
Buncrana,  
Co. Donegal,  
F93 CH79

Tel: 01 471 5898

Locall: 0818 690 690

Homepage: <https://services.mywelfare.ie/en/topics/pensions-and-older-people/caring-periods/>

Email: [pensioncaringsupports@welfare.ie](mailto:pensioncaringsupports@welfare.ie)

## Court Poor Box

### What is the court poor box?

In criminal prosecutions heard in lower courts (usually the District Court), the judge may order the defendant to place a donation in the court poor box in lieu of conviction.

This means that instead of being convicted and facing a prison sentence or a statutory fine, the defendant donates a sum of money to a charity decided by the judge.

The sum can vary in amount, depending on the offence. This donation is then lodged by the defendant with the court and paid over by the Court Service to the charity.

### Legal status

There is no legislation guiding the use of court poor boxes. The current system has evolved over the years from the judge's common law jurisdiction to exercise their discretion in imposing penalties.

Where an accused makes a payment to the poor box, the judge usually applies the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 or imposes a suspended sentence.

### Proposal to abolish the court poor box

In 2005, the Law Reform Commission published their Report on the court poor box: probation of offenders (pdf). This report makes recommendations for reforming the court poor box and the Probation of Offenders Act 1907.

In February 2014, the Department of Justice published the General Scheme of Criminal Justice (Community Sanctions) Bill. This Bill proposes to abolish the court poor box and replace it with a statutory Reparation Fund that will apply to minor offences dealt with by the District Court.

### Objections to the court poor box

The Law Reform Commission published a report on the court poor box (pdf) in 2005 and found that the system is unfair for offenders from different economic backgrounds.

Offenders who can afford to pay the fine can avoid conviction, while people who cannot afford to pay the fine have no choice but to have the conviction registered against them. The court poor box is also not universally used, so some offenders may not have the option available to them depending on where they are tried.

There are also concerns as to the lack of accountability regarding the use of funds, as well as concerns that donations to the court poor box deprive the Irish Government of the fines that would normally be imposed. It has been suggested that a new system where the money collected went to victims of crime would be more appropriate.

### How the court poor box works

There is no set procedure for how the court will handle the process.

Generally, if a judge orders that you make a donation to the court poor box and you have the funds to pay, the Court Registrar will collect the payment and issue you with a receipt.

If you do not have the funds with you but you can afford to pay, then arrangements will be made for you to pay at a later date.

Donations are forwarded to the relevant charity or organisation by the court.

If you do not have the funds to pay or choose not to make a donation, a conviction for your offence will be registered against you.

### Further information

Further information about the court poor box in your area is available from your local court. You can find contact information for courts throughout Ireland on the Courts Service website.

The Court Service also publishes annual reports that show which charities benefited from poor box donations.



## The Origin of the Christmas Tree

In winter trees and plants that stayed green all year round had a special meaning. Ancient people hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows as it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits and even illness.

In the 16th century in Germany, Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Some were made of wood that were shaped into pyramids and these were decorated with evergreens and candles. Martin Luther first added candles to a tree. He was walking towards his home one winter night when he amazed by the beauty of the stars twinkling in between the trees. So he tried to recreate the scene by bringing a tree inside and put candles on the branches.



It wasn't until the 19th century when Christmas trees started appearing in America. It is thought that the German and Irish immigrants brought this tradition with them when they went to settle in America. Before this celebrating Christmas was against the law and people were fined.

The Christmas tree became more popular with the elite American society when they saw Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with their children around a Christmas tree. Ornaments started arriving from Germany in the 1890's. Small trees were used by Europeans but in America trees that went from the floor to the ceiling were used. With the invention of electricity came electric lights making trees glow for days.



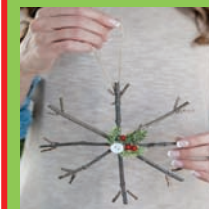
The most famous Christmas tree around the world is in New York at the Rockefeller Centre. This tradition dates back to the Depression era. The first tree was placed there in 1931 which was a small plain tree placed there by a construction worker. Another tree was placed there two years later with lights. Then one every year after. The tallest tree there arrived in 1948. It measured 100ft tall, it was a Norway Spruce that came from Killingworth in Connecticut. The tree now has over 25,000 lights.

Sourced: History Channel

## Homemade Christmas Decorations

### Salt Dough Ornaments

These handmade ornaments will take you right back to Grandma's house. To make your own, combine 4 cups all-purpose flour, 1 cup salt, and 1 1/2 cups of warm water in a mixing bowl. Knead until the dough is firm and smooth. Roll out dough and cut desired shapes (use a straw to poke a hole for hanging). Bake at 300°F until dry, approximately 1 hour; cool completely.



### Rustic Twig Christmas Ornaments

All you need are some twigs of equal length, some glue, twine or coloured wool or ribbon and whatever accessories you like. You can create any shape you wish using the glue to keep the twigs together. When finished, use the twine, wool or ribbon to make loop so that you can hang the ornament.

### Snowy Scenes

Create a white Christmas using inexpensive glass cylinders from a crafts store. Place one cylinder inside a larger one, then sprinkle a dusting of fake snow between the two and nestle a sprig of greenery on top of the snow. Add a pillar candle or battery-operated candle inside the centre cylinder. Group different size cylinders for your display.



### DIY Paper Photo Ornament



Using prints of your favourite family photos in either mono or colour. Remember you will need 2 copies of each picture for each side. You can cut them into various Christmas shapes. To strengthen the pictures, glue them to some cardboard. To protect the pictures and make them last longer, you can laminate them. If you don't have access to a laminator, you can buy self laminating sheets. These work very well. Punch a hole and thread some ribbon through the hole in order to hang it on the tree. These will make treasured personalised mementos.

Sourced: diys.com/Christmas-ornaments

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## Reindeer facts

1) Reindeer live in the Arctic tundra and damp forests of Greenland, Scandinavia, Russia, Alaska and Canada. In North America, reindeer are known as caribou – pronounced 'kar-i-boo!'

2) As the name suggests, reindeer are a species of deer. They are the only deer species in which both the male and female can grow antlers. In fact, males' antlers can grow up to a whopping 1.4 metres in length and have as many 44 points, called 'tines'.

3) Reindeer can live for up to 15 years in the wild, although domesticated reindeer (reindeer that are cared for by humans), can live for as long as 20 years.

4) When grazing, a reindeer's preferred food is a lichen – a fungi, moss-like plant that's often found in high, open spaces. In fact, it's so popular with reindeer that it's now become known as 'reindeer lichen!'

5) Humans have hunted reindeer for thousands of years for their meat, milk, fur and antlers – which can be fashioned into tools. For groups of people in Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden and Finland), Russia, China and Mongolia, reindeer herding is an ancient and important part of their culture.

6) Male reindeer can grow up to 1.2 metres tall at the shoulder and weigh up to 250 kilograms – that's over three times the weight of an average person! Females are a little smaller than males.

7) These beautiful beasts may be big, but they are still the target of hungry predators! Wolverines, bears, and even eagles are just some of the animals that prey on reindeer.

8) Reindeer spend up to 40% of their lives in snow, so they've developed special adaptations to help them survive the chilly conditions. Their cloven hooves (divided into two) spread their weight, helping them stand on snow and soft ground. Their hollow fur helps to trap heat, and

they're good swimmers, too!

9) Have you watched the movie Frozen II? The make-believe Northuldra tribe you see in the Enchanted Forest are based on the Sámi people – the famous reindeer herders of northern Norway. The Sámi really do use reindeer to pull sleighs through the snow, just like Sven does in the movie (and Santa does on Christmas Eve)!

10) Believe it or not, reindeer actually do have red noses like Rudolph! Well, sort of... Lots of tiny veins circulate warm blood around their nose, heating up the air they breathe in so they don't get cold – clever!

Source: [www.natgeokids.com/](http://www.natgeokids.com/)



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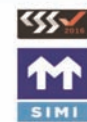
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#### *St Mary's Brass & Reed Band*

The Band is almost at the end of what has been a very busy 2023. The highlights of last month was our Annual Mass for Deceased Members where we pay tributes to those who have made it possible for St. Mary's Brass and Reed Band to still be here after so many many years. We were delighted to have a small group of our members available to provide some festive tunes in the Square at the turning on of the Christmas lights on Sunday 26th November proving that there's no substitute for a bit of live music to add atmosphere to an event.



December promises to be equally as busy for the Band with the main event being our Christmas Concert which is being held in St. Mary's Parish church on Sunday 10th at 7.30pm with the very reasonable entry charge of just €5. It will be first time for us to hold a concert in the church and as we have found at the band Masses, the sound should be amazing so we are hoping for a good attendance. We hope to pay a visit to a couple of Nursing homes as well while we will be playing at the Ecumenical Service in St. Mary's Church of Ireland on Wednesday 20th of December to round the year off. Of course Christmas day wouldn't be the same without some Christmas music outside the Church after 11.30 mass on Christmas Day, a tradition that has continued for many decades despite the best efforts of rain, frost and even snow to beat the hardy bunch of band members who come to play.

The Band would like to extend grateful thanks to the people of Maynooth and the surrounding areas for their continued support throughout the year. It's a costly undertaking to keep the Band going financially and all your donations are most welcome. Our Annual Christmas collection takes place on Saturday 16th December and our members will be shaking buckets at Manor Mills, Supervalu and other areas around the town so please do your best to show your support,

Finally can we wish everyone a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.



## ST MARY'S BRASS AND REED BAND

# Christmas Concert

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## Catherine Murphy T.D. Social Democrats, Kildare North.

Constituency Office ph: 01-6156625 Dáil Office ph: 01-6183099 - e-mail: catherine.murphy@oireachtas.ie

### Social Democrats express no confidence in Garda Commissioner

Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy Gannon has expressed no confidence in Garda Commissioner Drew Harris following last week's unprecedented level of rioting in Dublin city centre. "The scenes of near anarchy in our capital city last Thursday night have no place in any civilised democracy. "These shocking events are the result of an absence of leadership – from both Garda management and Justice Minister Helen McEntee; a lack of planning or preparedness; inadequate resources; and insufficient training. There must be accountability for these failures.

"From 2pm last Thursday, far-right agitators were posting in social media channels – on Telegram and elsewhere – that large protests were planned near O'Connell Street. Some Government offices were evacuated as early as 4pm, so it is clear there was an awareness of a heightened threat level. "In those circumstances, it beggars belief that the main thoroughfare of our capital city, and the surrounding area, were essentially surrendered to far-right thugs and marauding gangs for hours that night.

"This lack of preparedness endangered rank-and-file gardaí, who were at times completely outnumbered, surrounded and viciously attacked by these thugs. The central core of the city was effectively lawless and prominent businesses were looted while buses, Luas carriages and garda vehicles were set ablaze. "I, and others, have been warning about the rise of the far-right and the problems of violence and anti-social behaviour in the inner city for at least 18 months. Throughout that time, the Garda Commissioner has adopted a policy of appeasement of the far-right, which has not worked and is now utterly discredited.

"This level of wanton thuggery and criminality needs a far stronger policing response – not the kid glove approach adopted on this Commissioner's watch. "The riots in Dublin last week follow a spate of brutal attacks on tourists during the summer – in addition to violent far-right protests outside Leinster House – and will add to the perception that the city is no longer safe.

"The Minister for Justice's only response was to announce €10 million in funding for garda overtime and some community wardens – a short-term, sticking plaster solution that will not fix the systemic issues we are facing. "Despite the increased prevalence of far-right groups, the Commissioner has continued to take a softly-softly approach to this very real threat to law and order – an approach that blew up in his face in Dublin city centre last night.

"It is little over two months since rank-and-file gardaí in the GRA overwhelmingly voted no confidence in the Commissioner. Thursday's shameful events show that this lack of confidence was not misplaced. "Last night's catastrophic policing failure must be a watershed moment in how the State responds to future security threats. I have lost all confidence in Drew Harris' ability to do that. "The Minister must now explain why, given the violent mayhem in Dublin last night, she should remain in her role – and she must come into the Dáil at the earliest opportunity and do that."

**For Written Answer on : 28/11/2023**

**Question Number(s): 295**

**Question Reference(s): 52545/23**

**Department: Education**

**Asked by: Catherine Murphy T.D.**

### QUESTION

To ask the Minister for Education if her attention has been drawn to a shortage of school places at primary and second level in Kildare north; the steps she is taking to address this

issue; if she will provide a schedule of works planned for the provision of new school buildings and the expansion of existing buildings in Clane, Prosperous, Sallins, Naas, Maynooth, Celbridge and Leixlip; the stage each plan is at; and the expected delivery date of same.

### REPLY

As the Deputy may be aware, for school planning purposes, my Department divides the country into 314 school planning areas and uses a Geographical Information System (or GIS) to anticipate school place demand. Information from a range of sources, including Child Benefit Data, school enrolment data and information on residential development activity is used for this purpose.

In addition, Project Ireland 2040 population and housing targets inform the Department's projections of school place requirements. Having considered the projected requirements in each school planning area, including North Kildare areas, my Department then makes an assessment of the existing capacity and identifies any requirement for additional provision. Additional provision is made as necessary, where the existing capacity is insufficient for future needs.

The Department is aware of pressures for school places in School Planning Areas across North Kildare. A critical next step is to acquire clarity on the actual number of additional first year places required for 2024 in order for an appropriate solution to be put in place. In that context, schools in a number of areas of enrolment pressure, including Maynooth, Prosperous, Clane, Kilcock and Celbridge have been requested to share data on applications for admissions.

The Department is liaising closely with schools to ensure that this data is provided as soon as possible, and once it is received the actual requirement for places can be established. The Department is already having discussions with the relevant school patrons and authorities regarding potential solutions but the understanding of the actual school place needs will give clarity as to the specific actions that are required.

This close engagement with schools and patrons will also allow the Department to identify particular further capacity requirements for the forthcoming years and put any required solutions in place – beyond those that are already in train – to ensure sufficient school places to meet the needs of students in the area. My Department has invested significantly in schools in County Kildare over recent years. Under the National Development Plan, a total of almost €250m has been invested in schools in County Kildare over the last five years. This investment has focused on provision of additional capacity to cater for its increasing population and there are further significant projects in our pipeline including for the North Kildare area.

These projects include recently completed new school buildings in Maynooth and Naas. Additionally, a number of further new school buildings and extensions are at construction or planned, including in Prosperous, Kilcock, Maynooth, Celbridge, Leixlip, Naas and Clane. The Capital Programme details the school projects that are being progressed under Project Ireland 2040. The current status of large-scale projects being delivered under Project Ireland 2040, including projects in the school planning areas in question, may be viewed on my Department's website at, [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) and this information is updated regularly.

In addition, a list of large-scale projects completed from 2010 to date may also be viewed on the website. I can assure the Deputy that Department officials will continue to actively engage with schools and patrons to ensure that there is appropriate provision for all students across North Kildare for the 2024/25 school year and into the future.

### Homelessness figures surpass 13,000 for the first time

Homelessness figures for end November 2023 shattered another grim record while local authorities are failing to spend their social housing budgets, according to Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy: "The latest figures show there are now 13,179 people living in homeless emergency accommodation – tragically, 3,991 of these are children. This is the highest number ever recorded in the history of the State. "In 2019, when the number of people living in homeless accommodation surpassed 10,000, Darragh O'Brien – in his role as opposition housing spokesperson – decried that another record had been shattered by the Fine Gael Government.

"He went on to state that 'this cannot continue' and outlined how Fianna Fáil would fix the housing crisis. "We are now more than three years into his term as Minister for Housing and the number of people living in emergency accommodation has grown by 52 per cent. Shamefully, the number of children growing up without a home has increased by a staggering 50 per cent. "This is a monumental failure that brings with it devastating consequences. We urgently need more social homes to protect children from the trauma of growing up homeless.

"This week, the Department of Housing published their Supplementary Estimates for 2023. It showed that €220 million allocated for new local authority housing will not be spent this year. Last year, €237 million allocated to build new local authority housing was left unspent. "This failure to spend money allocated for social housing is having a direct impact on the increasing amounts of people becoming homeless. "The Minister for Housing needs to explain why he is repeatedly failing to ensure that these budgets are spent where they are urgently needed."

### Government is failing to get to grips with vacancy

The revelation that just 3,000 homes are being charged the Vacant Homes Tax shows that a significant amount of work is needed to ensure the measure is effective, according to Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy: "Ireland's housing crisis continues to have a devastating impact on people's lives all over the country. The floundering Vacant Homes Tax is the latest example of this Government's ineffective measures and half-baked plans. "There were a staggering 166,000 vacant homes identified in the 2022 Census – 48,000 of these have been empty for over six years and the figures do not include holiday homes.

"Bringing these empty properties back into use is the fastest and most sustainable way to increase the supply of urgently needed homes. "Revenue monitored electricity usage to identify an initial 25,000 vacant homes that were issued with letters asking the owners to pay the Vacant Homes Tax. "This makes it particularly frustrating that just 3,000 homes so far are being charged the tax – a drop in the ocean in terms of Ireland's true level of empty properties. "A well-designed Vacant Homes Tax, combined with grants that are available for renovations, should be an effective tool to bring these empty homes back into use. "However, the Vacant Homes Tax, as it currently stands, is miles off making a meaningful difference to this country's housing crisis."

### Social Democrats' motion calls for economic sanctions on Israel

The Social Democrats brought a motion before the Dáil on Wednesday, November 15 calling on the Government to withdraw diplomatic status from the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland and push for the imposition of EU-wide economic sanctions on Israel. "The permissive and ambivalent reaction by the international community to the litany of war crimes and flagrant breaches of international law by

(Continued on page 16)





## Catherine Murphy T.D. Social Democrats, Kildare North. (Cont.)

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*(Continued from page 15)*

Israel has been shameful. “Israel’s cruel and disproportionate response to the barbaric October 7 attacks by Hamas has, to date, seen more than 11,000 people killed in Gaza – over 5,000 of them children – and resulted in the collective punishment and mass displacement of millions of innocent civilians. “Our motion calls on the Irish Government to lobby for the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement on the grounds that the human rights clause in the trade deal has been seriously breached.

The EU should also suspend Israel’s access to the €95 billion Horizon Europe fund for research and innovation. “Given Israel’s failure to cease the deliberate targeting of civilians, journalists, UN staff and healthcare workers, the Government must withdraw the diplomatic status of the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland. “A referral should also be made to the International Criminal Court requesting that it investigate whether members of the Israeli government and military have committed war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

“There is more that can be done in this country to sanction Israel for its massacre of Palestinian civilians. As a matter of urgency, the Government should enact the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill 2018 and the illegal Israeli Settlements Divestment Bill 2023. “Ireland has been among a small number of Western nations to unequivocally condemn the daily atrocities being carried out in Gaza by Israel’s armed forces. However, words alone are not enough to convey our horror and outrage at the death and devastation being wrought by the Israeli government.

“The Government must intensify its advocacy for an immediate ceasefire and the release of hostages. It is also essential that Ireland provides strong leadership at EU level and advocates for economic sanctions on Israel until it ends the carnage in Gaza and complies with international law.” “The Government should also pursue all possible avenues at the EU and the UN to build an international alliance for peace to provide a pathway away from violence and back to the negotiation table. The Palestinian and Israeli people need a political, not military solution to this crisis.”

### Government squanders €1.5m on hypocritical disability rights campaign

Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy has accused the Government of blatant hypocrisy after it emerged that €1.5 million has been spent on an advertising campaign promoting disability rights – all while the State continues to deny disabled people those very rights. “The disability awareness campaign, which has been heavily promoted in newspapers, on television, radio and in public spaces, is bound to rankle with disabled people in Ireland. Its core message that ‘Disability Rights Are Human Rights’ sounds like a sick joke for several reasons.

“The shameful reality is that disability rights in this country are just a myth. From the moment they are born, disabled people and their families must fight the system to access even the most basic services. “More than 16,500 are currently waiting for their first appointment with a Children’s Disability Network Team (CDNT). Of these, around 10,000 have been waiting for over a year with no intervention or therapy. Rather than enjoy basic rights, these children are being actively harmed due to persistent neglect by the State.

“The €1.5 million squandered on a hypocritical advertisement campaign would be better spent on desperately needed investment in threadbare disability services. “If the Government is genuinely serious about respecting the human rights of disabled people, it would ratify the optional protocol of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) without further delay. Parties that ratify the

protocol agree to recognise the competence of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to consider complaints from individuals or groups who claim that their rights under the UNCRPD have been violated.

“If disabled people had rights, as the advertisements claim, they would be able to take a case to the UN to exercise these rights.”

### Minister for Education must prioritise teacher recruitment crisis in our schools

The Minister for Education has failed to treat the teacher recruitment crisis in our schools with the urgency it deserves, according to Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy. “A survey of over 1,000 primary and special schools conducted last month found there were more than 800 vacant teaching posts in classrooms across the country. Even more alarming is the warning from schools that an additional 1,200 long-term teacher vacancies are anticipated within the next three months.

“The survey noted that teacher recruitment is particularly problematic in Dublin due to the prohibitive cost of accommodation, as well as in schools in disadvantaged areas, special schools and gaelscoileanna. “With newly qualified teachers unable to afford to live in urban areas, many of them are taking up posts abroad. It is unconscionable that we should be training our teachers for export when there is a growing recruitment crisis in our schools.

“Barriers to taking up a career in teaching here, both financial and academic, must be removed if we are to incentivise our talented graduates to remain in Ireland. “In addition to tackling housing affordability, the Government should reduce the Professional Master of Education course from two years to one, as proposed in a Dáil motion by the Social Democrats this time last year. This would considerably ease the financial burden of studying to be a teacher and speed up the pipeline of skilled new graduates into our schools.

“Recruitment issues are leading to greater inequalities in our education system. The crisis is impacting some of our most vulnerable students as schools are often forced to redeploy special education teachers to plug staffing gaps. “Instead of concentrating on proposals for a ban on mobile phones for primary school students, Minister Foley’s focus should be on prioritising the teacher recruitment crisis in our classrooms.”

### Disadvantaged communities left behind by the Government

The Government is failing miserably to address the issue of generational poverty, according to Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy. “An analysis of data included in the Pobal Deprivation Index reveals that the number of people living in areas classed as ‘very disadvantaged’ or ‘extremely disadvantaged’ increased from 143,506 in 2016 to 195,992 in 2022 – a rise of more than 52,000 over six years.

“Even though the figures show that employment growth returned to 2006 levels, areas classed as ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ disadvantaged did not experience the same level of improvement recorded in the majority of communities. “The index shows that a disproportionate number of disadvantaged communities are located in my own constituency of Dublin Central, as well as the north and west suburbs of the city and other locations outside the capital.

“Significantly, these are all areas where there are more lone parents, higher unemployment rates and lower levels of education. “Despite the Taoiseach’s pledge to make Ireland the best country in Europe to be a child, his Government continues to pay lip service to the issue of generational

poverty. “This was evident in the recent Budget when the Qualified Child Payment only increased by a derisory €4. The Government also failed to create a new DEIS-Plus categorisation for the most disadvantaged schools, as proposed by the Social Democrats.

“Eliminating poverty requires a combination of child and adult income supports, in addition to access to quality public services. The Government must now use the data published by Pobal to ensure that resources and supports are targeted at the disadvantaged areas that need them most.”

### Uisce Éireann must accelerate efforts to protect our waters

Uisce Éireann must accelerate efforts to end discharges of raw sewage into Ireland’s rivers and coastal waters, according to Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy.

“In its ‘Urban Waste Water Treatment 2022’ report, published today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) highlights the scale of the challenge facing Uisce Éireann in eliminating raw sewage discharges into our waterways. It is going to take a multi-billion euro investment, and at least two more decades, to bring all waste water treatment systems up to the standard needed to protect our environment and provide for future needs.

“The EPA reveals that over half of Ireland’s waste water discharges are not meeting EU standards, which has serious implications for public health and nature protection. As many as 26 towns and villages around the country were discharging raw sewage daily in mid-2023, according to the report.

“There are areas identified in the report where Uisce Éireann clearly need to up their game. For instance, it is extremely disappointing that poor management practices at a number of upgraded plants have caused inadequately treated sewage to be discharged into the sea. This is completely unacceptable given that such incidents were preventable.

“It is now 30 years since Ireland was required to bring provisions into force to comply with EU treatment standards to protect the environment. With just 45 per cent of waste water treated to these standards, at the current rate of progress Ireland stands to be in breach of EU regulations for 50 years.

“Uisce Éireann must now take steps to accelerate its improvement programme and focus its resources on preventing pollution in the priority areas highlighted by the EPA.”

### HAP renters now effectively locked out of the market

New figures released by the Simon Communities of Ireland reveal the true scale of the rental crisis faced by those reliant on the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), according to Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy.

“In its ‘Locked Out of the Market’ report for September, the homeless charity found just 27 properties available to rent within the discretionary rate of HAP – the lowest number since the surveys began in 2015.

“One of the starkest findings was that half of the 16 rural and urban areas included in the quarterly survey had no HAP properties available to rent in any household category within standard or discretionary limits. Overall, the report found just 901 properties around the country available to rent at any price, 75 per cent of which were in Dublin.

“The figures show that the Government’s over-dependence on private rental accommodation is failing vulnerable

*(Continued on page 17)*





## Catherine Murphy T.D. Social Democrats, Kildare North. (Cont.)

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*(Continued from page 16)*

families and individuals who are reliant on HAP. This is against the backdrop of almost 13,000 people – including 3,895 children – living in emergency homeless accommodation and more than 500,000 adults still sleeping in their childhood bedrooms.

“While the HAP scheme is an essential lifeline for tens of thousands of people, it is completely unrealistic to expect payment rates to keep pace with soaring market rents. It is a sticking plaster solution that will not tackle the housing crisis in the medium to long-term.

“In our alternative budget, the Social Democrats called for 12,000 new social homes, 5,000 cost rental homes and 5,000 affordable purchase homes to be built in 2024. Nothing less than this level of ambition is required to make a difference to the lives of those struggling to put a roof over their heads.”

### HIQA must inspect all Direct Provision accommodation where children are living

Social Democrats TD Catherine Murphy has called for all accommodation used under the State’s Direct Provision system to be inspected by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) following a damning report by the Ombudsman for Children.

“This is the first time that the Ombudsman’s office has laid down a special report to the Houses of Oireachtas since it was established 20 years ago, which is an indication of the gravity of the situation.

“In his report, Ombudsman Niall Muldoon sets out a number of concerns about the safety and welfare of children living in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS). These include the continued use of temporary accommodation such as hotels and B&Bs; lack of inspections and monitoring of centres; and not enough vulnerability assessments of children.

“It is now approaching three years since the Government published a White Paper setting out its intention to phase out Direct Provision by 2024. Due to the unforeseen challenges of accommodating refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine, it was inevitable that there would be some slippage in meeting this target.

“However, the Ombudsman raised similar concerns about children living in Direct Provision back in 2021 so his frustration at the Government’s lack of progress on the issue is completely understandable.

“The State has a responsibility to ensure the safety, wellbeing and dignity of these extremely vulnerable children. Given the seriousness of the concerns raised in Dr Muldoon’s special report, it is vital that all accommodation used under the Direct Provision system is inspected by HIQA as a matter of urgency.”

Recent Parliamentary Question in relation to an update on the funding for on-campus student accommodation: 603. To ask the Minister for Education and Skills if he will provide an update on the funding of on-campus student accommodation that was announced for Maynooth University in November 2022 (details supplied). [43713/23]

On 29 November 2022, I received Government approval for a new policy to provide state assistance to stimulate the development of new and additional student accommodation for public higher education institutions. This landmark policy response will, for the first time, see the State providing financial support in the construction of student accommodation, and underpins the policy commitments set out in Housing for All.

To date, the Government has approved a total of up to €61 million in capital and current funding to unlock the development of circa 1,000 beds, including 116 beds at Maynooth University. These developments have planning permission but have stalled as a result of increased construction costs. My officials are also examining additional proposals for potential developments within the HEI sector.

My Department and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) are actively working through the financial and governance due diligence process for these projects in line with the Public Spending Code. It is anticipated that the due diligence process for the Maynooth University project will be completed successfully this week, with the project progressing to tendering stage thereafter, subject to approval.

Work is underway on site on an additional 583 private beds spaces in Maynooth. Planning permission has been granted for 241 public beds with a further 260 beds awaiting a planning decision.

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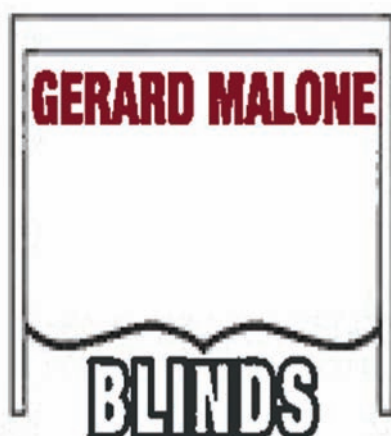
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## Prayer to the Sacred Heart

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### ***The Little Match Girl by Hans Christian Andersen***

It was terribly cold and nearly dark on the last evening of the old year, and the snow was falling fast. In the cold and darkness, a poor little girl with bare head and naked feet, roamed through the streets. It is true she had on a pair of slippers when she left home, but they were not of much use. They were very large, so large, indeed, for they had belonged to her Mother and the poor little girl had lost them in running across the street to avoid two carriages that were rolling at a terrible rate.

One of the slippers she could not find, and a boy seized the other and ran away with it saying he could use it as a cradle when he had children of his own. So the little girl went on with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and had a bundle of them in her hands. No one had bought anything of her the whole day, nor had anyone given her even a penny. Shivering with cold and hunger, she crept along, looking like the picture of misery. The snowflakes fell on her fair hair, which hung in curls on her shoulders, but she regarded them not.

Lights were shining from every window, and there was a savory smell of roast goose, for it was New-year's eve, yes, she remembered that. In a corner, between two houses one of which projected beyond the other, she sank down and huddled herself together. She had drawn her little feet under her, but could not keep off the cold. And she dared not go home, for she had sold no matches.

Her father would certainly beat her; besides, it was almost as cold at home as here, for they had only the roof to cover them. Her little hands were almost frozen with the cold. Ah! perhaps a burning match might be some good, if she could draw it from the bundle and strike it against the wall, just to warm her fingers. She drew one out- "scratch!" how it sputtered as it burnt. It gave a warm, bright light, like a little candle, as she held her hand over it. It was really a wonderful light. It seemed as though she was sitting by a large iron stove. How the fire burned! And seemed so beautifully warm that the child stretched out her feet as if to warm them, when, lo! the flame of the match went out!

The stove vanished, and she had only the remains of the half-burnt match in her hand. She rubbed another match on the wall. It burst into a flame, and where its light fell upon the wall it became as transparent as a veil, and she could see into the room. The table was covered with a snowy white table cloth on which stood a splendid dinner service and a steaming roast goose stuffed with apples and dried plums. And what was still more wonderful, the goose jumped down from the dish and waddled across the floor, with a knife and fork in it, to the little girl. Then the match went out, and there remained nothing but the thick, damp, cold wall before her.

She lit another match, and then she found herself sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree. It was larger and more beautifully decorated than the one she had seen through the rich merchant's glass door.

Thousands of tapers were burning upon the green branches, and colored pictures, like those she had seen in the shop-windows, looked down upon it all. The little one stretched out her hand towards them, and the match went out.

The Christmas lights rose higher and higher till they looked to her like the stars in the sky. Then she saw a star fall, leaving behind it a bright streak of fire. "Someone is dying," thought the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only one who had ever loved her, and who was now in Heaven, had told her that when a star falls, a soul was going up to God.

She again rubbed a match on the wall, and the light shone round her; in the brightness stood her old grandmother, clear and shining, yet mild and loving in her appearance. "Grandmother," cried the little one, "O take me with you; I know you will go away when the match burns out; you will vanish like the warm stove, the roast goose, and the large glorious Christmas-tree." And she made haste to light the whole bundle of matches, for she wished to keep her grandmother there. And the matches glowed with a light that was brighter than the noon-day. And her grandmother had never appeared so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and they both flew upwards in brightness and joy far above the earth, where there was neither cold nor hunger nor pain, for they were with God.

In the dawn of morning there lay the poor little one, with pale cheeks and smiling mouth, leaning against the wall. She had been frozen on the last evening of the year; and the New-year's sun rose and shone upon a little child. The child still sat, holding the matches in her hand, one bundle of which was burnt. "She tried to warm herself," said some. No one imagined what beautiful things she had seen, nor into what glory she had entered with her grandmother, on New-year's day.

Source: [www.thoughtco.com/little-matchstick-girl-short-story](http://www.thoughtco.com/little-matchstick-girl-short-story)







# Writers’ Corner - Short Stories/Articles from our Readers

## A Day to Remember

Standing inside the bedroom window, Joe adjusted his binoculars so that a swan floating on the river came into focus. It must be the cob hanging about while the pen brooded her eggs. Sweeping the opposite bank, with its row of two-storey houses, he noticed a burly individual accompanied by a boy pushing a supermarket trolley with a red handle onto the green. Now what on earth was going on? Next minute he had the answer as the man caught the top edges of the trolley, swung it above his head and sent it flying into the river. The small boy looked on in admiration as the startled swan flapped clumsily away.

Anxious lest he be seen, Joe took a last, quick look, noting the man’s plaid cap and leather jacket, before stepping back into the bedroom. Later, he and his son, Jason, strolled down to the river. The trolley had ended up on a mud bank, so that he could make out the name ‘Walker’s Supermarket’ on the projecting handle. Further back, the cob was feeding near the built-up nest on which his mate sat, as if guarding her from dangerous humans. Joe felt a sudden surge of anger. Granted that he himself tipped cut grass from his garden down the riverbank but this fellow had gone too far. ‘Will you report him to Tom Walker, Dad?’ Jason asked. ‘Maybe, but you’re not to breathe a word about this to anyone.’

That afternoon while buying groceries he spotted Tom. After a brief chat he mentioned the trolley. ‘Well, the damn blackguard!’ Tom shook his head. ‘I’ve been wondering why my trolleys keep disappearing.’ ‘Do you know who that fellow is?’ Joe asked. ‘Do I know who he is?’ Tom echoed. ‘Indeed I do. He comes in here now and again, usually for six-packs of beer and a few groceries. Wait till Sergeant Coyle hears about this.’

‘Is he married? I saw a boy with him.’  
‘Married! His partner walked out on him with their son a few years ago, and would you blame her? You’ll tell the sergeant what you saw?’  
‘Do I have to?’  
‘Well, yes, if we’re to get a conviction.’  
‘I’ll have to think about it – Jason might be picked on in school.’  
‘Well, think about this: the school is short of funds and, meanwhile, that gentleman is drawing compensation for a bad back.’

By: P.G. Nerney

## New Year’s Day

There’s not one theme that tempts me now  
to take my pen and let words flow;  
too many sorrows cloud my sky,  
too few the sun rays breaking through.

I could recount some victories  
but they are sullied by defeats;  
most promises of days gone by  
when tested yielded emptiness.

Perhaps I’ll write about a bird,  
a robin flying down for cheese?  
He does not wonder how things go  
or fret about some enterprise.

Each day he’s glad to be alive,  
a hedge will shelter him from rain;  
he does not yearn for victories;  
this moment is his true domain.

By: Colin Scott

## Actually Going Outside

We decide to do the cliff walk  
from Bray to Greystones  
even though the day is grey  
and the heavy clouds are low overhead  
with a distinct possibility that it will bucket out  
of the skies  
but we don’t care  
because we’ve set aside the day for this  
and a few pissy showers aren’t going to stop us  
from making the journey along the winding  
Wicklow coastline  
because we promised ourselves we’d do it  
and we want to stick to our guns this time  
because we’ve spent too long putting things off  
and wasting our time on Facebook and  
YouTube  
and prevarication  
and telling our friends  
all the interesting things we do when in reality  
it’s a virtual reality we’re fabricating that is  
more or less  
an entangled mass of tissue stories and tall  
tales  
and posed-for selfies  
to delude ourselves and others  
that we have an actual life  
but not this time  
because  
this time  
we are actually going outside.

By: Peter McCluskey

## CHRISTMAS

To my knowledge Ireland is the only country which identifies December with Christmas, "Mí na Nollag". Maybe we could have had April as "Mí na Cásca" only that Easter can at times be in March! Anyway it's just a few weeks away and for Christians it celebrates an extraordinary event in the history of the world. Not only do Christians believe there is a God but they believe that about two thousand years ago he came and lived and walked among us. While he was among us in the flesh he told us a great many things about who we are and what our destiny is. He was a carpenter or a builder, the experts aren't sure, but he has left no physical structure after him and never wrote a word except whatever he wrote in the dust on that famous occasion.

So why do we believe that he ever did come amongst us? There is the entire New Testament and at least four reputable, contemporary, secular authors referred to him as someone whose name was in the mouths of many. These writers weren't followers, far from it, but they knew of him and thought he was sufficiently relevant to be mentioned. One of them was a Syrian who had heard of Jesus and was struck by the great miracles he had performed, Mara bar Serapion.

But apart from the evidence of contemporaries isn't the world as we know it crying out for such a one as Christ? Isn't it a world of mayhem, savagery and inexplicable pain? (Gaza)? Isn't it really "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

signifying nothing"?(Macbeth). According to Dawkins and millions like him, after all the pain and disappointment, there is nothing in store for each of us but six feet of clay or a box in a crematorium wall! Is that what it's all about? I, for one, will not accept that it is. My reason tells me that absurdity will not have the final word. Everything has meaning. Nothing is without an explanation! But what about war? "Since wars begin in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" (UN Charter). Is the sermon on the mount not the greatest anti-war statement ever spoken? Great people have heeded it, St Paul, Chesterton, Pope Francis, Nelson Mandela and billions more throughout the ages. Jesus of Nazareth is the source of all meaning and his words, life, death and resurrection cannot be gainsaid except by a perverse intellect.

We don't often hear much about this and it's never referred to in homilies, but God is suffering with us and all humanity in Jesus. He is suffering with us in the wars and the colonial massacres and the racist subjugation of indigenous peoples all over the world. Also in the scurrilous lies told by leaders of countries in order to control affairs in other countries for their own selfish ends. And this was never as easy as it is now with instant communication through the worldwide web. Those leaders' day of reckoning will come! Let us thank the Lord this Christmas for becoming one of us and taking our troubles on his shoulders!

GM.

## The Broken Sleigh

Tomorrow is Christmas  
And I’m sad to say  
Christmas is cancelled  
Due to a broken Sleigh

Santa brought it to a Mechanic  
But it couldn't be fixed  
He was in a great panic  
What about the presents kids had picked!!

Santa couldn't bear  
All the kids with frowns  
And the coldness in the air  
No joy in the towns.

Santa wasn't himself  
He wasn't eating at all  
Until a little Elf thought  
I can fix it all.

The Elf was almost done  
Making Santa’s new Sleigh  
And Oh no here comes the sun  
Its almost that time of day

He gathered the Reindeer  
And he prepared the Sleigh  
When the Elf showed Santa  
He shouted Hip Hooray....

Santa was so happy  
Watching all the families play  
Christmas is now fixed  
Its going to be the best Christmas Day

By: Isabelle Maher



## Everyone knows a Beatles song

Everyone knows a Beatles song  
“Love, Love Me Do”  
I bet you know a Beatles song  
“With Love, From Me To You”

I grew up with a Beatles song  
“I Wanna Hold Your Hand”  
My friend he sings a Beatles song  
Like “Lonely Hearts Club Band”

My girlfriend cries to a Beatles song  
“I Saw Her Standing There”  
My Dad adores a Beatles song  
“Michelle” - beyond compare

The neighbour hums a Beatles song  
“The Long And Winding Road”  
My dog he loves a Beatles Song  
“Everybody’s Got Something To Hide  
Except Me And My Monkey”

By: Peter McCluskey

## THE MIRACLE PRAYER

DEAR Heart of Jesus, in the past I have asked you for many favours. This time I ask for this special one (mention favour). Take it dear Heart of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then, in His merciful eyes it will become Your favour not mine. Amen Say this prayer for three days, promise publication and prayer & favour, will be granted, no matter how impossible.

Never known to fail.  
Thanksgiving for favour received.





# How much can I borrow?

Quite a bit! Borrow up to €100,000, and you can even do it all online! Contact us for a chat.

Loans are subject to approval. Over 18s only. Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply.

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## Maynooth Cycling Campaign

### Review of the Year

The last year has seen little progress in providing additional cycle infrastructure in Maynooth. Although funding is at unprecedented levels, only two significant active travel projects were funded at the construction stage in the county including the Royal Canal between Maynooth and Leixlip. Last month, it was revealed that the contract to complete the Royal Canal will have to be retendered in the New Year and that progress on the Celbridge Road and Beaufield /Newtown Road schemes has stalled. Even minor schemes – such as the provision of additional bike parking for schools or bike bunkers (see below) – the council has failed to make significant progress.

In contrast, there is better news from Naas where a new bridge has been provided over the Grand Canal at Sallins and the cycle tracks on the Kilcullen Road are taking shape. Kilcullen Road is looking particularly good although it would look even better had it been “properly” finished in red surfacing as at Liffey Valley. On the school front, the increase in cycling to St. Mary’s Boys’ school is encouraging but the continuing difference in the number of pupils cycling to the two secondary schools is puzzling. One has three times the number of cyclists compared to the other which can’t be explained purely by the difference in the number of pupils.

Maynooth Cycling Campaign took delivery of its trishaw for Cycling Without Age in March. We are grateful to Kildare County Council and Kildare Sports Partnership for financial help to purchase it. We would also like to thank Maynooth University for allowing us to store the trishaw in one of their bike sheds.

Finally, climate change has not gone away. Maynooth has been chosen as Kildare Decarbonation Zone and with the Kildare Action Plan likely to be approved early in the new year, opportunities will arise to further promote and enable increased active travel. Let’s hope that we will see more progress in Maynooth in 2024 than 2023. Meanwhile, Have a happy and safe Christmas.

### Maynooth Cycling Without Age

On the 11 November, Maynooth Cycling Campaign took part in the Kildare Sports Ability Day in Maynooth University. Kildare Sports Partnership brought a number of organisations together to offer a range of sports to people who, for a range of reasons, wouldn’t normally participate in activities. Cycling Without Age came with its trishaw and offered tours to a number of the participants.

While Maynooth’s Cycling Without Age will be taking a break over the winter, Maynooth Cycling Campaign has been asked to provide training to pilots in St. John of God Celbridge. They have recently acquired a trishaw and are keen to use it over the winter as part of their services.

### Noise

Many people listen to their radio when out walking. Having recently acquired a pair of airbuds, I have begun to use them to listen to music or podcasts when walking. (Yes, I do walk as well as cycle). One of the unexpected results is that you are much more conscious of the noise from motorised traffic. You walking along a road listening to a broadcast when suddenly a passing car drowns out the volume.

Kildare County Council has approved a Noise Action Plan but the Council has failed to meet its commitments to produce annual reports on progress.

### Bike Bunkers

Earlier this year, Dublin City Council recommended that 200 bike bunkers should be provided by 2026. We are still waiting for Kildare to provide one - even as a pilot project. There are apparently a number of issues to be resolved but no date has been provided when one will be delivered.

### Road Safety

There has been a total of 170 road fatalities on Irish road to date (27th Nov). This is an increase of 30 or 21% from 2022 for the comparable period. In 2019, road fatalities were at a minimum. That year there were only 125 fatalities.

**Maynooth Cycling Campaign is a non-party political cycling advocacy group. Further information on the campaign is available on our website. We are part of Dublin Cycling Campaign CLG, the legal entity for Irish cycling advocacy and through it a member of the European Cycling Federation.**



## How to make your home smell amazing for Christmas

It's the most wonderful time of the year, and the enchanting aromas are some of our favorite holiday season features. The festive Christmas smells of crisp peppermint, fresh-cut evergreen, cinnamon sticks, and freshly baked sugar cookies can bring back memories from Christmases past. The scents instantly boost your holiday spirit and fill your home with a cozy ambiance on a cold winter night.

There's no reason to wait until December 25 to surround yourself with your favorite seasonal scents. These easy projects and ideas will add the scents of Christmas to your home all winter long.

### Deck the halls with fresh greenery.

Nothing says Christmas quite like boughs of fresh-cut greenery. Incorporate fragrant foliage into your holiday decor to add organic texture and straight-from-the-forest fragrance. Layer a cedar garland atop your mantel, with sprigs of spruce, or arrange evergreen boughs down the center of your dining table for an easy winter centerpiece.

### Light a candle.

One of the easiest ways to add Christmas smells is to light a scented candle. Whether you prefer an earthy fragrance or the aroma of freshly baked treats, there are so many lovely holiday candles to choose from. Light one (or perhaps a few!) to create a cozy atmosphere.



### Blend seasonal essential oils.

Essential oils are a natural way to make your home smell amazing, and some blends are perfectly suited for winter. Mix oils like myrrh, cypress, sweet juniper berry, cinnamon bark, and tangy wild orange to evoke festive feelings. Fill up a spray bottle with distilled water and a few drops of your favorite oils for room spray, or add essential oils to your diffuser to create a holiday-inspired aroma.

### Heat up a holiday simmer pot.



A pot of water and a few items from your press are all you need to create a simmering source of Christmas smells. Add your favorite ingredients (such as apple slices, cinnamon sticks, vanilla extract, and cloves) to a saucepan of water and simmer on low heat. Add more water as it evaporates. This stovetop potpourri can also be made in a slow cooker.

### Make your own herbal potpourri.

Mix essential oils into dried flowers, leaves, and greenery to create a custom potpourri blend. Pour your homemade filler into vases and decorative bowls throughout your home to spread a subtle seasonal scent. You can also place your potpourri in jam jars and put little fairy lights in them.



### Craft a dried-fruit wreath.

Dehydrate grapefruits, oranges, lemons, and limes to use in a fruity citrus wreath. Dust the dried fruit with fine glitter for a sparkly touch, then attach the slices to a foam wreath form with straight pins. Mount the wreath above your fireplace to infuse the room with a fresh citrus scent.

### Swap out hand soaps.

Another quick way to immerse your home in seasonal charm: Swap out everyday hand soap for a holiday variety. Choose one that smells of peppermint candy or a freshly cut pine tree for a burst of Christmas cheer every time you wash your hands.

### Hang Spice Cushions In Entryways For A Warm And Welcoming

While spice cushions can be bought pre-made they are just as easy to make at home. These gorgeous pouches make for wonderfully rustic Christmas decor and contain a wonderful combination of warm spices such as cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon (and sometimes a little fir too) to help make your home smell festive.

Place them where it might be more difficult to place a candle or oil diffuser.



Source: [www.bhg.com/decorating/seasonal/winter/house-smell-like-christmas/](http://www.bhg.com/decorating/seasonal/winter/house-smell-like-christmas/) Source: [www.homesandgardens.com/life-design/christmas/how-to-make-a-home-smell-good-for-christmas](http://www.homesandgardens.com/life-design/christmas/how-to-make-a-home-smell-good-for-christmas)

***Christmas scents are great for putting you in a festive mood. There's nothing nicer than relaxing on the sofa with the soft glow of a gorgeous candle and beautiful scents filling the room.***





## Gold Medal Winners 2016 - 2017 - 2018 2019 - 2021 - 2022 - 2023

We would like to wish all our followers, volunteers and our many many supporters who have helped Tidy Towns in 2023 a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I hope the partnership will continue into 2024 and beyond.

We won our 7th Gold Medal in 2023 and we hope to improve on this result in 2024. Thanks to The Glenroyal Hotel and Leisure Centre for hosting our Christmas party for our volunteers it was a wonderful evening. We gave Certificates and a Peace lily to some of our very loyal Volunteers, Mattie Callaghan, Liz Callaghan, Marian Cawley and Moira Baxter. Mattie told us he started volunteering 44 years ago and Moira more than 30 years, congratulations to them all, Maynooth is a better place to live because their dedication.

Thanks to John Kavanagh for organising the delivery of the Christmas tree 🎄 to Courthouse Square and the erection of same by our volunteers. The lights were turned on in the town by our own Vincent Mulready at an event organised by Mark Nolan.

We planted 20,000 bulbs in different areas around the town over the past few weeks, they should make a good display come the Spring.

We will continue to meet up every Saturday morning at 9am weather permitting for the month of December.

Please follow us on Facebook for more up to date information or contact us by email at [maynoothtidytowns@outlook.ie](mailto:maynoothtidytowns@outlook.ie)

Mary Molloy  
Maynooth Tidy Towns Association PRO





## December Events at Maynooth Community Library

For further information contact: [www.kildare.ie/library/maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie](http://www.kildare.ie/library/maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie) Ph: 01-6285530



[facebook.com/KildareCountyLibraryService](https://facebook.com/KildareCountyLibraryService)



[twitter.com/kildarelibrary](https://twitter.com/kildarelibrary)

### Children's Events

#### Kildare Disability Week

Inclusive Little Maker Session for 3 – 7 Year Olds.

Saturday 2nd December at 9.30am

Join us for an inclusive Little Maker session for neurodiverse children for 3 - 7-year-olds. Children can build amazing creations using construction toys such as Magna-Tiles, Duplo / Lego, Mega Bloks, Blockaroo, Plus, puzzles and more. To allow children to explore construction toys in a relaxed atmosphere this session will have a small number of children and the first 30 minutes of this session will take place while the library is closed. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Suitable for 3-7 Year Olds (Older children welcome too).**

**Book Ticket here:** <https://buytickets.at/maynoothlibrary/1074541>

#### Creative Writing Workshop for 8-10 year olds

**Friday 15th December , 3.45pm – 4.45 pm**

Have you a young writer who loves coming up with stories but sometimes doesn't know where to start? Come and join Niamh for some December themed character creation and story-writing! Based on the Fighting Words method, we can collaborate as a group to get started and then see where our individual imaginations take us! Requires a good grasp of individual writing skills, so please only book if your child is 8+.

Limited places.

**Booking via TicketTailor required:** <https://app.tickettailor.com/events/maynoothlibrary/1068223>

#### Stories, Songs and Games in Italian for 2 - 5 year olds

**Sat 16th Dec, 10am - 11am**

Join us for some stories, songs, fun activities and games in Italian.

Suitable for 2 to 5 year olds. The event will take place in Italian so the children are required to have some knowledge of the language.

**Booking via TicketTailor required:**

<https://buytickets.at/maynoothlibrary/1036783>

#### Stories, games and fun activities in Italian for 6 - 9 year olds

**Sat 16th December, 3pm - 4pm**

A chance for children to practice their Italian and learn more about Italy and its culture through stories, fun activities and games in Italian. Suitable for 6 to 9 year olds. The event's language will be Italian so the children are required to have some knowledge of the language.

**Booking via TicketTailor required:**

<https://buytickets.at/maynoothlibrary/1036805>

### 'Let's talk about Parenting'

#### Supporting your Anxious Teen, Thursday 30th November

Presented by Helen Vaughan

What can you do for your anxious teen?

This workshop with Helen Vaughan from Maynooth Counselling & Psychotherapy will discuss:

- Understanding teen development
- How to parent adolescents
- How anxiety impacts our young people & supporting them.

Teen issues: secondary school, bullying, social anxiety & boosting resilience

**Book here:** <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/letstalkaboutparenting/994002>

### Young Adult Events

#### Online Teen Writers Group, Ages 12-15

**Thursday 7th and Tuesday 14th of December, 6pm – 7pm**

A social group for young writers aged 12 to 15, to chat, share work and bounce ideas. Online via MS Teams.

#### Teen Book Club, Ages 12-15

**Friday 8th December, 4pm- 5pm**

A book club with a difference; while there are always bookclub books to avail of, teens can bring along their own recommendation to discuss during the meeting which takes place in Maynooth Community Library. Book Rec for December meeting available in the library now: Under 14s 'Darkmouth' by Shane Hegarty, 14+ Last Night at the Telegraph Club.

### Family Time @ Your Library Events

#### Arts & Crafts for Ages 5-7,

**Sat 9th December , 10 – 10.45am**

Join us in Maynooth Library for a fun winter-themed arts and crafts session, as part of our Family Time at Your Library programme. All children attending this workshop must be accompanied by a parent /guardian.

**Suitable for ages 5-7 years.**

**Book your place on TicketTailor:** <https://buytickets.at/maynoothlibrary/1073678>

#### Mindful Paper Xmas Craft Workshop with Aoife Munn for all the family **Saturday, 16th December, 12pm – 1pm**

Family Christmas Paper Crafts Session - Join us for a lovely mindful paper craft session and create Christmas tree hanging decorations, Christmas trees and everything you will need to get your home Christmas ready with a homemade feel! All children attending this workshop must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

**Booking via TicketTailor required:** <https://buytickets.at/maynoothlibrary/1069295>

#### Festive Fun, Food and Music @ Maynooth Community Library

**Wednesday 20th December, 3- 4pm**

Come along for some festive sweet treats and music with Maynooth Library Staff and kick off the holiday season ! All Welcome. **\*Drop In. No booking required\***

### Healthy Ireland @ Your Library Events

#### My Girls Gynae - Teen Gynae Health Explained

**Monday 18th December , 10.00 am – 11.00 am**

A talk for parents of tweens and teens – bringing together medical and holistic information. Geraldine Connolly, Consultant Adolescent Gynaecologist and Paula Herbert, Yoga teacher and Ayurvedic Practitioner will be joining us talking about:

- Menstrual Cycle Phases, hormonal fluctuations, impact on energy, mood & sports participation.
- Common period problems and treatments, irregular periods, painful periods.
- Sanitary Products
- The Importance of diet for a healthy cycle

Holistic lifestyle recommendations to help manage stress

**Booking Via TicketTailor required :** <https://buytickets.at/healthyirelandatyourlibraries/1067075>

### Climate Action Events

#### Zerowaste Maynooth

**Saturday 9th December, 2- 4pm.** Ladies Clothes swap: Join a free community event with Zero Waste Maynooth as it hosts its ladies clothes swap shop. Bring up to three pieces of clean clothes in good repair and swap for something new to you! All sizes and brands welcome. Enjoy swapping clothes as a way to tackle textile waste and save some money !

**Cloth Nappy Ireland :** Chat to volunteers from Cloth Nappy Library Ireland. A massive way to save waste and save money. So simple to use, drop by and chat to a volunteer.

**Kids toy swap** - bring one, take one! Let's get the kids used to the idea of swapping before buying!

**The Craft Corner** In the last of this series, Vanessa from The Craft Corner is back to help us learn some tips on repairing clothes. Vanessa is a fantastic teacher who can help tackle those repairs with your clothes and bring them back to life. We really appreciate all Vanessa's helps and tips to really add so much to our events.

Kildare Libraries aspires to contribute to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals; 10 (Reduce Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action)

**\*Drop In. No booking required\***

#### Sustainable Christmas Talk with Refillz Zero-waste Shop

**Thursday , 14th December , 6.30pm – 7.30pm, for adults**

Christmas, the most Wonderful or Wasteful time of the year?!

If you're dreaming of a 'Green' Christmas, then pop along to your local Kildare Library and the amazing team from Refillz zero-waste shop will give you some tips on how to enjoy the festivities sustainably and save a few quid along the way.

(Continued on page 24)



## December Events at Maynooth Community Library (Cont.)

For further information contact: [www.kildare.ie/librarymaynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie](http://www.kildare.ie/librarymaynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie) Ph: 01-6285530



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[twitter.com/kildarelibrary](https://twitter.com/kildarelibrary)

(Continued from page 23)

Kildare Libraries aspires to contribute to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals; Goal 4 (Education), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

**Booking required via Tickettailor**

<https://buytickets.at/maynoothlibrary/1069256>

### Adults

**The Poetry of James Joyce & Open Mic Night with Luain Press**

**Tuesday 5th December**

**6.00 – 7.00pm**

Are you a fan of Joyce? Maybe you just like poetry? Come along for discussions, readings and creative writing activities!

**\*Drop In. No booking required\***

**Breast Feeding Support Group with Public Health Nurse**

**Tuesday 12th December, 9.30 - 10.45am**

The group will be facilitated by the Public Health Nurse (PHN). All breast-feeding Mums and Mums-to-be welcome. Women who are pregnant are welcome as this will give the opportunity to ask any breastfeeding questions.

**No booking needed, just drop in.** \*\*\*Please ring the library doorbell between 9.30am & 10am as the library doors will be closed, and you will be let in\*\*\*

**New Fantasy/Sci-fi Book Club**

**First Meeting Tuesday 9th January, 7pm – 8pm**

Maynooth Community Library's is starting a new fantasy/ science-fiction book club which will meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. We'll be reading Yan Ge's novel "Strange Beasts of China" which will be available to collect from behind the desk through the month of December. Originally published in Chinese in 2006 and translated into English in 2020, the plot centres an amateur cryptozoologist who is commissioned to uncover the stories of the city's fabled beasts.

**Monday 12th December, 12.30pm – 2pm**

**Age Friendly Christmas Wreath-making Workshop with Sinéad of Festina Leinte**

**For Adults aged 55+**

Enjoy the winter wonder delight of making your own luxurious wreaths and garlands with seasonal berries, leaves and flowers!

All wreath materials sourced sustainably from the locality of Naas will be provided. Creative tips and guidance offered throughout the workshop, so that your own personal wreath-making style shines out! Refreshments provided. "Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas."

**Booking via Tickettailor required:** <https://buytickets.at/maynoothlibrary/1073619>

**Age Friendly Coffee Morning**

**Wednesday 13th December, 10.30 am – 11.30am**

As part of our Age Friendly Programme, drop in for a cup of tea/coffee and a chat with library staff and find out more about the libraries online and other services.

**\*Drop In. No booking required\***

**Movie Discussion Club**

**Tue 30th Jan, 7-8pm**

Calling all cinema goers and movie buffs! Maynooth Community Library is seeking expressions of interest for a Movie discussion club which would meet on the last Tuesday of each month 7-8pm, starting with the first meeting on Tue 30th Jan, 7-8pm, in Maynooth Community Library.

The film which the club will be discussing is to be confirmed (Copies of film will be available at the main library desk for the members of the club to watch at home and come in to discuss on the 30th Jan). To register for the club, please email Maynooth Community Library @ [maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie) or ask at the library desk.

### Exhibitions

#### Connections

**Thursday December 7th 2023 - Tuesday 9th January 2024**

A visual and energetic exploration of the interconnectedness of all things. How

does it make you feel? Each artwork encapsulates the intention to heal, integrate, and come back to wholeness as an individual and a part of the complex tapestry of life. Kamila Lukaszewicz is a Polish artist, and holistic therapist living in Ireland for the past 19 years. She derives her inspiration from nature. Kamila uses various forms and mediums to express the essence of living here at this time. To learn more visit: [alchemyuniverse.com](http://alchemyuniverse.com)

**Maynooth Community Library's Exhibition Space Open for Bookings**

If you are a local artist or art group and would like to book our exhibition space, please contact us. Maynooth Community Library's Exhibition Space is available to host exhibitions from August 2024. For booking enquiries, please email [maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie).

### Library Groups and Regular Groups

**Craft & Knitting Club**

**Every Monday**

**11.30am – 1.00pm**

Bring along your various crafts to inspire and to be inspired. Different craft demonstrations will take place during the year.

**Ciorcal Comhrá / Irish Conversation Group**

**Tuesdays / Dé Máirt**

**11.00am – 12 i.n.**

Ciorcal Comhrá / Irish conversation group. Fáilte roimh chách! All welcome!

**Baby & Toddler Group**

**Thursday Mornings**

**10.00 – 11.00am**

If you have a young baby or toddler and would like to meet other parents or minders in the area, come to our new stay and play group every Thursday morning at 10am.

**\*Drop In. No booking required\***

**Maynooth Women's Group**

**1st & 3rd Saturday each month**

**11.30am – 12.45 pm**

A meeting space for local women usually held on the first and third Saturday of the month at 11.30am.

**Women's Ex-Pats Group**

**Last Tuesday of the month**

**6.30pm- 7.30pm**

Calling all women who have relocated to Ireland, returned from abroad, or local ladies interested in welcoming expats! Our Women's Group offers a meeting place at the library to chat, make new friends, and share stories about transitioning to Ireland. Join us for an enriching experience of community, support, and connection.

**Book Clubs**

**U3A (University of the Third Age) Book Club**

**Monday 11th Dec**

**10.30 - 11.30am**

New members welcome.

**Midlands LGBT+ Book Club**

**Thursday 21st December**

**6.30 – 7.30pm**

Maynooth Library host a monthly book club in collaboration with Midlands LGBT+ Project, focusing on books by LGBT+ authors or with LGBT+ themes. Meetings take place on the third Thursday of each month. For more information or to enquire about joining, email [maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie)

**Crime Book Club**

**Tuesday 19th December**

**7.00 – 8.00pm.**

The Crime Book Club meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 7pm. If you are interested in joining the book club, please email Maynooth Community Library at [maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie)



## Maynooth University launches Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Maynooth University today has launched its Strategic Plan 2023-2028, which embodies a collective vision for the future and charts an ambitious path forward for the institution – one centred on excellence, opportunity and impact.

At an event hosted at the Technology, Society and Innovation Building, Professor Eeva Leinonen, President of Maynooth University, announced a series of initiatives that will drive the University’s strategic direction for the next 5-10 years.

“Education is a powerful force that can truly be life-changing. We believe in the transformative effect of exploring new interests and cultivating new ideas. At Maynooth University, students have the opportunity to not only gain knowledge but also to discover their passions and unlock their potential. Maynooth University encourages students to seize these opportunities and to embrace the journey of self-discovery that education provides,” Professor Leinonen said.



At the heart of the strategy are four pillars: globally recognised research excellence, innovative programmes of student learning that reflect modern ways of learning, enhanced internationalisation, and strong external partnerships. All students will graduate with future-focused skills including data and digital literacy and will have more opportunities for international study. There will be a focus on growing postgraduate student enrolment, building strategic international partnerships, and leveraging the University’s existing expertise to create a new National Centre of Excellence for Inclusive Higher Education. A new Partnerships Office will serve as a “front door,” facilitating engagement between the University and industry, enterprise and civil society.

A commitment to enhancing the student experience and advancing future-focussed educational opportunities will be enabled through:

- Further integration of ‘real-world’ opportunities into the student learning experience. **All students will graduate with future-focused skills in data and digital literacy.**
  - Embedding **international learning opportunities for all** within the student experience, with a focus on students for whom international experiences have been difficult to access.
  - **Expanding support services**, both on-campus and digitally, through the creation of a ‘One-Stop Shop’ for support services
  - **Greater support for student clubs and societies**, and **further development of sports and cultural facilities**
  - **Investment in technology-enhanced and inclusive approaches** to teaching, learning, and assessment
  - Establishing the **National Centre for Inclusive Higher Education** -leveraging MU’s expertise in widening access to higher education to inform national policy.
  - **A more flexible curriculum and co-design opportunities** to meet evolving student needs.
  - **Expanded academic programmes** to support lifelong learning and regional and national workforce needs, such as the establishment of a School of Health and Medicine.
- A new Graduate Research Academy** to support the current and next generation of researchers.

The President also announced that the University will establish a School of Health and Medicine, with plans to open a School of Nursing by 2025 already underway.

*Photos By Maxwel*



Aoife O’Connor, violinist with the Maynooth Chamber Choir, performing at the launch



Colm O’Reardon, Secretary General of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science speaking at the launch of Maynooth University’s Strategic Plan.



President of Maynooth University, Prof Eeva Leinonen meets Morgan Bullock, Maynooth University student and former Riverdance troupe dancer at the launch of Maynooth University’s Strategic Plan.



Students, Sarah Lindsay Swan and Kaylee Bailey Bromely speaking at the launch of Maynooth University’s Strategic Plan.



## Maynooth University welcomes Budding Scientists at its annual Science Night

Maynooth University welcomed budding scientists to its annual Science Night, hosting a series of free fun events including robot soccer, chemistry experiments, star gazing and fascinating talks. Science Night was part of Science Week, which took place from November 12-19.



**Maynooth University**  
National University  
of Ireland Maynooth



Pictured at Maynooth University's Science Night: Sophie & Lucy Nevin, Maynooth.

*Photos By Maxwell*



Emily and Andrew Quinn, Donadea, Co Kildare, pictured with a Katydid insect at Maynooth University's Science Night.



Pictured at Maynooth University's Science Night: Ciara Farragher, Maynooth.



Pictured at Maynooth University's Science Night: Anqi Wu, Maynooth.

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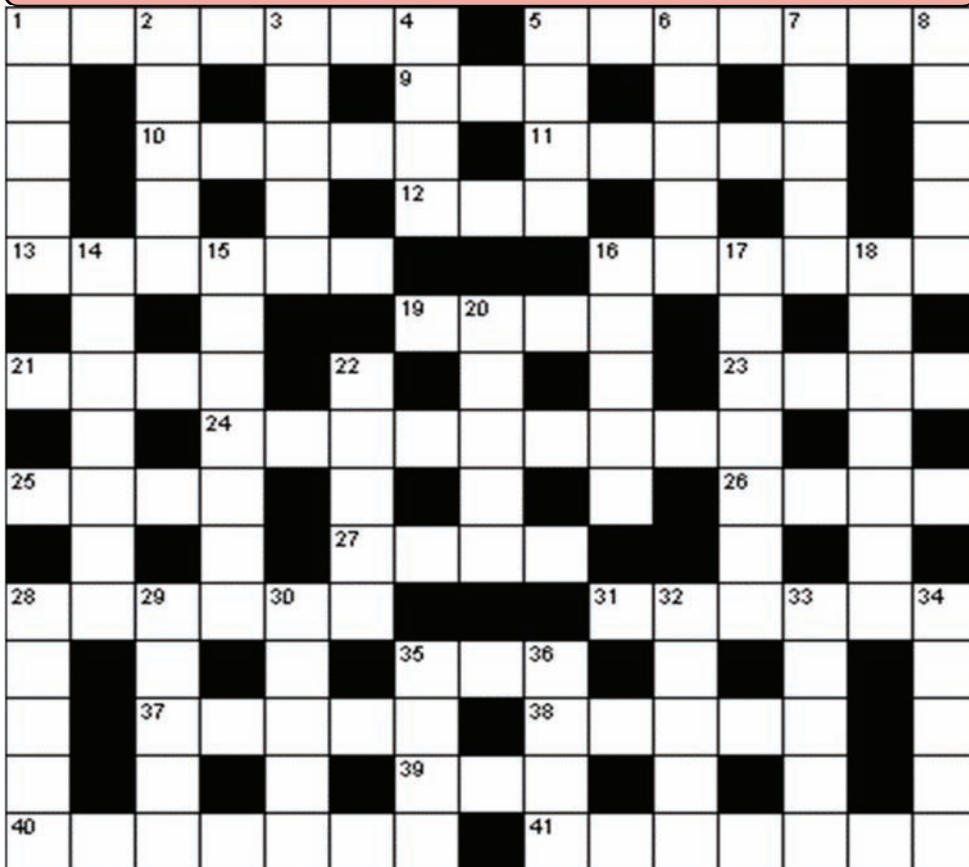
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## December 2023 Crossword - No. 530



### Clues Across

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sarcastic (7)              | 25. Capital of Peru (4)       |
| 5. Appears (7)                | 26. South American Indian (4) |
| 9. Lower limb (3)             | 27. Skin eruption (4)         |
| 10. Middle Eastern bread (5)  | 28. Put in (6)                |
| 11. Zest (5)                  | 31. Desert in N Africa (6)    |
| 12. Used to be (3)            | 35. Implore (3)               |
| 13. Parchment roll (6)        | 37. Hold responsible (5)      |
| 16. Lecture (6)               | 38. Cinder (5)                |
| 19. Egg-shaped (4)            | 39. Direct a gun (3)          |
| 21. Finely powdered earth (4) | 40. Protective helmet (4,3)   |
| 23. Resist openly (4)         | 41. Person that settles (7)   |
| 24. Clogged (9)               |                               |

## Solutions to Crossword No. 529



### Clues Down

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Weeps (5)                  | 18. Constable (7)               |
| 2. Higher (5)                 | 20. Scenes (5)                  |
| 3. Sum (5)                    | 22. Nasal grunt (5)             |
| 4. Sharp nail as on a cat (4) | 28. Inhabitants of Ireland (5)  |
| 5. Ova (4)                    | 29. Not drunk (5)               |
| 6. Result (5)                 | 30. Arrive at (5)               |
| 7. Dimness (5)                | 32. Superior of a monastery (5) |
| 8. Native of Saxony (5)       | 33. Fourth month (5)            |
| 14. Care (7)                  | 34. Later (5)                   |
| 15. Cake made of oatmeal (7)  | 35. Strike forcefully (4)       |
| 16. Narrow openings (5)       | 36. Precious stones (4)         |
| 17. Tinged with red (7)       |                                 |



### Difficult

### Sudoku Challenge

### Super Difficult

	8				4			1
				6	7			
		3	1					6
		2	8			9	5	
		1		2		4		
	4	5			9	2		
2					6	3		
			5	8				
3			7				8	

		1		3	7	4		9
8		9	5	1		6		
			4				3	1
		4		9		8		
1	2				8			
		3		8	2	1		5
6		5	1	7		2		

If you have access to a printer and wish to complete the Crossword and/or Sudoku for fun you can print the single page by going to File -> Print and print the single page number only.



## How to cook a turkey

There are many ways to cook a turkey, but the most common method is roasting. Roasting involves cooking the turkey in an oven at a low temperature for a long time, until the meat is tender and juicy, and the skin is crispy and browned. Here are some basic steps for roasting a turkey:



- Thaw the turkey in the refrigerator for about 24 hours per 4 to 5 pounds of weight. Make sure the turkey is completely thawed before cooking.
- Remove the turkey from the packaging and take out the giblets and neck from the cavity. You can use them to make gravy or stock, or discard them. Rinse the turkey and pat it dry with paper towels.
- Season the turkey with salt, pepper, butter, herbs, or any other flavorings you like. You can also stuff the turkey with bread, vegetables, fruits, or nuts, but make sure the stuffing is cooked to 165°F before serving.
- Place the turkey breast-side up on a rack in a large roasting pan. Tuck the wings under the body and tie the legs together with kitchen twine. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, without touching the bone.
- Preheat the oven to 325°F and roast the turkey for about 20 minutes per pound, or until the thermometer reads 180°F for the thigh and 170°F for the breast. Baste the turkey with pan juices or melted butter every 30 minutes to keep it moist. If the skin starts to brown too much, cover it loosely with aluminum foil.
- When the turkey is done, transfer it to a cutting board and let it rest for 15 to 20 minutes before carving. This allows the juices to redistribute and makes the meat easier to slice. Enjoy your turkey with gravy, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, or any other side dishes you prefer.

### Brussels sprouts are a versatile vegetable that can be cooked in many ways. Here are some popular methods:

- **Boiling:** Boiling is the most common method of cooking Brussels sprouts. To boil Brussels sprouts, trim the ends and remove any yellow or wilted leaves. Then, add them to a pot of boiling salted water and cook for 5-10 minutes, or until they are tender but still firm. Drain and serve with butter, salt, and pepper.
- **Roasting:** Roasting Brussels sprouts is a great way to bring out their natural sweetness and nuttiness. To roast Brussels sprouts, preheat the oven to 400°F. Trim the ends and cut them in half. Toss them with olive oil, salt, and pepper, and spread them out on a baking sheet. Roast for 20-25 minutes, or until they are crispy and browned.
- **Sautéing:** Sautéing Brussels sprouts is a quick and easy way to cook them. To sauté Brussels sprouts, trim the ends and cut them in half. Heat some oil or butter in a pan over medium-high heat. Add the Brussels sprouts and cook for 5-7 minutes, or until they are tender and lightly browned. Season with salt, pepper, and any other spices you like.
- **Steaming:** Steaming Brussels sprouts is a healthy and simple way to cook them. To steam Brussels sprouts, trim the ends and cut them in half. Place them in a steamer basket over a pot of boiling water and steam for 5-7 minutes, or until they are tender. Serve with lemon juice, butter, or any other sauce you like.
- **Grilling:** Grilling Brussels sprouts is a fun and flavorful way to cook them. To grill Brussels sprouts, trim the ends and skewer them on a metal or wooden stick. Brush them with oil and season with salt, pepper, and any other spices you like. Grill for 5-7 minutes, or until they are charred and tender.



Source: [www.bbcgoodfood.com](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com)



## Fruit and veg

- Place straw around the base of parsnips to prevent the soil freezing, which can make harvesting difficult.
- Plant thorn less blackberries, such as 'Loch Ness', for easy pickings of large, sweet, juicy fruits.
- Winter prune large fruit trees, such as apple and pear, to control their shape, size, and to increase their productivity.
- Plant fruit trees trained as cordons, fans or espaliers to make good use of limited space.
- Start to plan next year's crops and order seeds.
- Tidy up raspberry and blackberry beds – weed and mulch with compost, then tie new stems to support wires.
- Lift and divide large clumps of rhubarb, replanting the outer sections into soil enriched with well-rotted manure.
- Keep kale, winter cabbages and other brassicas covered with netting to protect them from hungry pigeons.
- Finish clearing old crops and debris from the veg plot, but only compost healthy material.
- Remove yellowed leaves on brassicas, so fungal diseases such as grey mould and downy mildew don't take hold.
- Make sure Brussels sprouts don't topple over in strong winds - tie to a cane for support and earth up the stems.
- Prune grapevines, cutting back side-branches to one or two buds from the main stem.

## Garden Maintenance

- Bring all watering equipment indoors, including hoses and sprinklers, so they don't freeze and split.
- Scoop fallen leaves and debris from ponds, leave on the side so pond life can escape, then add to the compost bin.
- Stand your Christmas tree in a bucket of water in a sheltered spot outdoors until it's time to bring it indoors.
- Clear out your shed, organise and clean your tools.
- Check tree ties and stakes are firm enough to stand up to winter storms.
- Prune blackcurrants once dormant, removing about a quarter of the old stems.
- Order well-rotted manure or mushroom compost to dig in over winter or spread over bare soil for worms to take down.
- Order summer-flowering bulbs such as lilies and gladioli.

## Flowers

- Protect terracotta pots from cracking in freezing weather by bringing them indoors or wrapping in bubble polythene.
- Rake up accumulated fallen leaves in borders that could be harbouring slugs and other pests.
- Plant bare-root roses and other deciduous shrubs, plus ornamental trees.
- Hang bird feeders near roses to attract hungry birds that will also pick off any overwintering pests.
- Cut stems of berried winter shrubs, seasonal flowers and evergreen leaves for festive decorations and wreaths.
- Move plants in pots to a sheltered spot if conditions turn very cold, as their roots are more exposed to the elements.
- Pile straw or bracken around the base of tender shrubs and climbers to protect them from falling temperatures.
- Plant fragrant winter shrubs in pots on the doorsteps.
- Prune climbing roses between now and February.
- Hard prune overgrown shrubs and hedges while they're dormant.
- Check stored bulbs and corms regularly for any signs of rot.



Source: [GardenersWorld.com](http://GardenersWorld.com)

Seasons Greetings to All





# Leftover Ideas

## Creamy Curried Turkey & Rice Soup

(Turkey can be substituted for any meat you have leftover)

### Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil	1 onion
3tbsp Thai red curry paste	2 x 400g cans coconut oil
400ml chicken stock	100g risotto rice
4 large eggs	200-300g leftover turkey shredded
340g can sweetcorn, drained	2 -3 limes, juiced
2 spring onions, sliced	

### Method

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion and fry for 10 mins or until softened and turning translucent. Add the curry paste and cook for 1 min. stir in the coconut milk, chicken stock and risotto rice and bring to a simmer. Cook for 15-20 mins or until the rice is tender.
2. Bring a pan of water to a simmer, add the eggs and cook for 5 mins to warm everything through. Season to taste and finish with the lime juice. Gently peel the shells off the eggs and cut them in half. Top the soup with the eggs and spring onions.



## Cheeseboard Soufflé (Use up leftover cheeses from cheeseboards)

### Ingredients

50g butter, plus extra for greasing	25g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
200ml milk	400g leftover hard cheese, cut into chunks
100ml double cream or crème fraîche	4 eggs, separated
Grating of nutmeg	Pinch cayenne pepper

### Method

1. Heat the oven 200c/180 fan/gas 6. Melt all the butter in a saucepan. Brush a 20cm soufflé dish with a little of the butter, then dust with flour. In the saucepan, stir the flour into the rest of the melted butter, then sizzle everything for 1min. Gradually pour in the milk to make a white sauce, then add two-thirds of the cheese and carry on cooking to melt. Leave to cool slightly, then mix in the remaining cheese, the cream or crème fraîche and the egg yolks. Season, then add the nutmeg and cayenne pepper.
2. In a clean bowl, whisk the eggs whites until stiff. Fold into the cheese sauce, then carefully tip into the soufflé dish. Bake the soufflé for 25mins until puffed up and golden.



## Leftover Christmas Lunch Patties

### Ingredients

200g leftover roast potatoes, finely chopped	150g leftover cooked carrots or swede, finely chopped
150g leftover cooked Brussels sprouts, finely sliced	100g leftover cooked stuffing, finely chopped or crumbled
50g leftover cooked cabbage, or any cooked veg	1 clove of garlic, grated
1 tsp grated ginger	splash of tabasco
100g leftover cooked sausages, finely chopped	100g leftover turkey, shredded or finely chopped
50g cheese, grated (any kind)	2 tbsp bread sauce or mayonnaise
1 tbsp chopped herbs (coriander, parsley or chives)	5 tbsp plain flour
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil	2 tbsp rapeseed oil




### Method



























1. Heat the oven to 200c/180c fan/gas 6. Mash the potatoes well in a large bowl using a potato masher or fork. Add the carrots, sprouts and stuffing and mash to combine. Stir in the cabbage or any cooked veg you have and season well. Stir in the garlic, ginger, tabasco, sausages, turkey, cheese, bread sauce or mayonnaise and herbs, mixing everything well until even combined. Put the flour in a second shallow bowl. Lightly oil your hands, and mould handfuls of the patty mixture into burger-sized patties. If they start to fall apart, add a little more bread sauce or mayonnaise. Lightly dust the patties in the flour mixture, then flatten them slightly between your palms.
2. When all the mixture has been used (6-8 patties), heat the sesame and rapeseed oils in a heavy-bottomed frying pan or skillet over a medium heat. Fry the patties for 2-3 mins until they have a golden crust. Carefully flip and fry for another couple of mins on the other side until golden. Transfer the patties to a baking tray and bake in the oven for 5 mins until deeply golden and crisp on the outside and cooked through.












































# Junior Puzzles




































































































































Look at the table and write the correct letters below the pictures.

1                     

2                  

3                  4                  5                   6                  7                   8                  9                   

## Christmas fun

Match the words to the correct pictures to complete the crossword. Then find a secret message.

1 bells  
2 candle  
3 candy cane  
4 card  
5 chimney  
6 Christmas tree  
7 elf  
8 gingerbread  
9 holly  
10 letter  
11 lights  
12 ornaments  
13 presents  
14 reindeer  
15 Santa Claus  
16 sleigh  
17 snowman  
18 stocking  
19 wreath

To Santa from Lucy

Merry Christmas

Why was the snowman embarrassed when he was spotted rummaging through a bag of carrots?  
He was caught picking his nose.

NB: To Print - go to File, select Print and put in this page number to avoid printing all the pages. Then Print.

All puzzles sourced free from Google





# FILM/DVD MONTHLY BY BERNIE CLAXTON

## LOVE ACTUALLY 20TH ANNIVERSARY



1) What does Liam Neeson's character do for a living?

- A. Journalist
- B. Teacher
- C. Journalist
- D. Actor

9) In which English city is the majority of the film set?

- A. Birmingham
- B. London
- C. York
- D. Nottingham



2) What is the Prime Minister's Name?

- A. Brian
- B. David
- C. Roger
- D. Fran

10) Which popular Christmas song does Sam play backing drums for in the school show in Love Actually?

- A. Last Christmas
- B. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree
- C. All I Want For Christmas Is You
- D. Fairytale of New York

3) Name the singer on the album Alan Rickman gave Emma Thompson as a Christmas present?

- A. Whitney Houston
- B. Tina Turner
- C. Joni Mitchell
- D. Janis Joplin

4) Which American actor has a cameo as the President of the United States?

- A. Tom Hanks
- B. Al Pacino
- C. Bradley Cooper
- D. Billy-Bob Thornton

5) Bill Nighy's "Christmas Is All Around" video is a copy of a famous 1980's song. Which one?

- A. Billie Jean
- B. Addicted to Love
- C. Hello
- D. We Are the World

6) Which star of "Love Actually" appears in British comedy, The Office?

- A. Bill Nighy
- B. Andrew Lincoln
- C. Martin Freeman
- D. Ricky Gervais

7) What airport does the final scene of the movie take place in?

- A. London Airport
- B. Heathrow Airport
- C. Stansted Airport
- D. Luton Airport

8) What language does Colin Firth's character learn to surprise his housekeeper

- A. Portuguese
- B. Spanish
- C. French
- D. German

### LOVE ACTUALLY QUOTES

"Love, actually, is all around."

"At Christmas, you tell the truth"

"To me, you are perfect"

"And my wasted heart will love you until you look like this."

"Worse than the total agony of being in love?"



### Lighthouse Cinema Christmas Movie Season

*ELF*

Will Ferrell (dir. John Favreau)

*DIE HARD*

Bruce Willis (dir. John McTiernan)



*THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL*

Michael Caine (dir. Brian Henson)

*LOVE ACTUALLY*

Hugh Grant (dir. Richard Curtis)



*IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*

James Stewart (dir. Frank Capra)

*HOME ALONE*

Macaulay Culkin (dir. Chris Columbus)

*SCROOGED*

Bill Murray (dir. Richard Donner)





## Maynooth Community Contacts Listing

Group Name	Contact Number	E-Mail Address	Facebook Page/ Website
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An Post Sorting Office Maynooth	01-6293390		
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Brass & Reed Band (St Mary's)		sec@stmarysbandmaynooth.ie	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/maynoothband/">https://www.facebook.com/maynoothband/</a>
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Cemetery Committee (Laraghbryan)	01-6293018		
Church of Ireland	01-6292163	secretary@meath.anglican.org	
Citizen Information Centre	1890777121	maynooth@citinfo.ie	
Cllr Brendan Wyse	087 2328867	brendan.wyse@gmail.com	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/brendanwysefg">https://www.facebook.com/brendanwysefg</a>
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Cllr. Tim Durkan	086-8632784	tim.durkan321@gmail.com	
Cloth Nappy Library Ireland	087-9949183	zerowastemaynooth@gmail.com	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NappyLibraryIreland">https://www.facebook.com/NappyLibraryIreland</a>
Community Welfare Services	0818607080	Kildarecws@welfare.ie	
Employment Office	01-6106000	bo.maynooth@welfare.ie	
Intreo Employment Services Office	01-6016360	EstMaynooth@welfare.ie	
James Lawless T.D.	01-6183587	james.lawless@oireachtas.ie	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/JamesLawlessFF/">https://www.facebook.com/JamesLawlessFF/</a>
Kildare Civil Defence	045 980529	pmcneela@kildarecoco.ie	
Kildare County Council	045 - 980200	customerservice@kildarecoco.ie	
Kildare County Council (Local Office)	01 - 6286236		
Kildare MABS	0818 07 2600	kildare@mabs.ie	
Maynooth Autism Friendly Town	0863329050	autismfriendlytownmaynooth@gmail.com	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/maynoothaft/">https://www.facebook.com/maynoothaft/</a>
Maynooth Community Care Unit	01-6106351		
Maynooth Community Church	01-5054990	office@maynoothcc.org	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/maynoothcommunitychurch/">https://www.facebook.com/maynoothcommunitychurch/</a>
Maynooth Community Library	01-6285530	maynoothlib@kildarecoco.ie.	<a href="http://facebook.com/KildareCountyLibraryService">facebook.com/KildareCountyLibraryService</a>
Maynooth Cycling Campaign	086-8252934	Maynoothcycling@gmail.com	<a href="https://maynoothcyclingcampaign.com/">https://maynoothcyclingcampaign.com/</a>
Maynooth Fishing Club	01-6293202	info@maynoothfisheries.com	
Maynooth GAA Club		secretary.maynooth.kildare@gaa.ie	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/maynoothgaa/">https://www.facebook.com/maynoothgaa/</a>
Maynooth Health Centre	01-6106130		
Maynooth Kilcock Lions club		contact@maynoothkilcocklionsclub.org	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/MaynoothKilcockLionsClub/">https://www.facebook.com/MaynoothKilcockLionsClub/</a>
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Maynooth Town Football Club	086-1060654	info@maynoothtownfc.ie	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/MTFC1969/">https://www.facebook.com/MTFC1969/</a>
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North Kildare Tennis Club		info@northkildaretennis.ie	
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Post Office	01-6286259		
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Zero Waste Maynooth	087-9949183	zerowastemaynooth@gmail.com	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/zerowastemaynooth">https://www.facebook.com/zerowastemaynooth</a>

**If you wish to have your Community contact added, updated or removed from the above listing please e-mail [office@maynoothcep.com](mailto:office@maynoothcep.com) with “Community Contact” in the subject line.**