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An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Cuir do chuid Tuairimí in iúl: Imeachtaí Saorchraolta

Tá athbheithniú ar bun ag an Aire Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán ar liosta d'imeachtaí spóirt agus d'imeachtaí eile a cheart a bheith ainmnithe mar imeachtaí lena mbaineann tábhacht ollmhór leo don tsaothair.

Ní mór na himeachtaí ar an liosta a chraoladh ar bhonn seirbhíse saorchraolta, cibé beo nó athchraoladh. Ní mór 2 de na 4 chréitear a leanas a bheith á gcomhlíonadh ag an imeacht: **comhbhá ghinearálta speisialta** a bheith ag baint leis do thíre; go dtuigtear go ginearálta go mbaineann **tábhacht cultúir ar leith** leis do dhaoine na tíre; baint a bheith ag an bhfoireann náisiúnta leis; nó gur **craoladh** an t-imeacht go traidisiúnta ar sheirbhís **teilifíse saorchraolta lenar bhain ar a laghad 5% de sciar den lucht féachana leis**. Is ionann sin agus sciar na ndaoine a bhfuil d'acmhainn acu féachaint ar an imeacht agus a fhéachann ar an imeacht i ndáiríre.

Cuirfidh an tAire fáilte roimh thuairimí maidir leis an liosta reatha agus na moltaí maidir leis na himeachtaí eile a d'fhéadfaí a mheas lena n-ainmniú. An 14 Eanáir 2021 an dáta deiridh a nglacfar le haighneachtaí. Beidh feidhm ag forálacha na nAchtanna um Shaoráil Faisnéise 1997 go 2014.

Is féidir tuilleadh eolais a fháil agus tuairimí a chur ar aghaidh trí shuibhré ar líne ag www.gov.ie/designationofevents. Nó is féidir leat cóip chrua de fhreagraí an tsuibhré a sheoladh chuig Darragh Hogan, Athbheithniú ar Chraoladh Mórimeachtaí, An Rannán Craoltóireachta agus Meán, An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán, 23 Sráid Chill Dara, Baile Átha Cliath 2, D02 TD30.

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Have Your Say: Free-to-Air Events

The Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media is undertaking a review of the list of sporting and other events that should be designated as events of major importance to society.

Events on the list must be broadcast on a free to air basis, on either a live or deferred basis. The event must satisfy 2 of the following 4 criteria: that it has a **special general resonance** within a country; it has a generally recognised, **distinct cultural importance** for the population; there is involvement of the **national team**; or the event has traditionally been **broadcast on free television with at least a 5% audience share**. That is the share of people who have the possibility to watch the event that actually watch the event.

The Minister welcomes observations on the current list and proposals for other events that could be considered for designation. The closing date for receipt of submissions is 14 January 2021. The provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 to 2014 will apply.

Further information and submission of observations via an online survey is available at www.gov.ie/designationofevents. Alternatively, submit a hard copy of survey answers to Darragh Hogan, Review of Major Events Coverage, Broadcasting and Media Division, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, 23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2, D02 TD30.

WORTH THE WAIT Skibb schoolboys' big day

The pupils of St Patrick's Boys NS in Skibbereen finally got to make their First Holy Communion last weekend. They are:, top row: Delvids Banga, Jake Holmes, Liam Allan, Kacper Kondraciuk, David Hourihane, John Bohane, Ben Twohig, Timmy Curran, Charlie O'Shea, Cian Lynch and Leo Dowdall. Middle row: Tony Smith, Callum Crangle, Ryan Coleman, Rory O'Driscoll, Tomás Hayes, Paddy Hamilton, Ryan O'Driscoll, Max O'Donovan, Conn Kelleher and Adrian O'Driscoll. Bottom row: Mikolaj Menducki, Jakub Surowiecki, Ciaran O'Donovan, Conor Gill, Charlie Heaton Jones, Danny Crowley, Charlie McCarthy, Noah Maguire, James O'Neill, Rhian McCarthy and Patrick Silva Santos.

(Photos: Kornel Photography)

Liverpool tickets never turned up for Bandon man

A BANDON man who paid a deposit for Liverpool match tickets on the DoneDeal website never received the tickets and couldn't contact the man who was selling them afterwards, a court in the town has heard.

Ian O'Sullivan of 54 Cherry Lawn, Church Rd, Blackrock in Cork pleaded guilty to one charge of theft by deception at Bandon District Court.

Sgt Trish O'Sullivan told the court that on September 25th 2019 the injured party reported to Bandon gardai that he had paid a deposit of €160 for Liverpool match tickets on the DoneDeal website from his TSB bank account to an Ulster Bank account.

'He received no tickets and couldn't make any contact with the defendant. Gardai later made contact with Mr O'Sullivan and he admitted the offence and said he spent the money on gambling,' said Sgt O'Sullivan.

The court heard that he has 138 previous convictions, including 40 for theft and 30 for theft by deception. He had compensation in court for the injured party. Solicitor Ray Hennessy said his client is married with three children between the ages of 11 and 14 and that he has been gambling since the age of 16.

Giving evidence, Mr O'Sullivan said all his convictions relate to gambling and he still has problems. He told Judge John King that when he came out of prison he was determined to turn over a new leaf. 'I have had periods of good absences from gambling and I now have a steady platform going forward. I ring my probation officer every day and I attend online meetings. I can't continue going down the road I'm going.'

Judge King directed the preparation of a probation report and put the case back to June 4th 2021. 'If there's a favourable report, the court will consider suspending the sentence,' said Judge King.

Long wait for driving and theory tests

BY BRIAN MOORE

THERE are now almost 700 people waiting to take their driving test in West Cork, with the Road Safety Authority (RSA) looking ad to employ more driving testers.

At the test centre in Skibbereen, there are 137 people scheduled for a driving test, with another 557 awaiting a date.

But the backlog continues to grow, with new driving applications every day, and the waiting time for a test date now between 25 and 30 weeks.

In the meantime, over 31,000 stu-

dent drivers across the country are also experiencing long delays awaiting appointments for their theory test.

Added to the over 64,000 people awaiting actual driving tests, there are now almost 95,000 people nationwide waiting to get their full driving licences.

'We currently have 64,512 customers either scheduled or eligible to take a driving test,' a spokesperson for the RSA said.

'Pre-Covid19 our waiting time was less than six weeks. Now it's in the range of 25-30 weeks. Post-Covid,

our driving test capacity has reduced, with daily output per tester dropping from eight to six tests per day. We are taking proactive measures to increase capacity in the Driving Test Service.'

These measures announced by the RSA include: increasing the number of tests per day; additional overtime tests, including Saturdays; and upping the number of testers.

The RSA has made a formal submission to the Department of Transport for an additional 80 driver testers, with the objective of getting a ten-week waiting time.

As for theory tests, the RSA said a trial remote option to take the test was in place.

'While bookings for the theory test are in place up to mid-2021, there is significant extra capacity being made available from January to March,' the RSA spokesperson said.

Initially the pilot would allow tests for trucks and buses.

'Ultimately it will mean people can do the theory test remotely,' they added.

They have also asked anyone who cannot attend to inform them in time, so the test slot can be allocated

to another candidate.

At the Bantry Driving Academy, Mary Keohane has welcomed any initiative that will shorten the waiting times for those seeking to get their full driver's licence.

'While the waiting times are causing anxiety for many people, especially in rural areas where other transport options are not available, the RSA have to be commended for prioritising our frontline workers during the Covid-19 pandemic,' Mary Keohane said. 'Any move to reduce the waiting times has to be welcomed.'



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Bid to join Arctic Council is welcomed

WEST Cork maritime lawyer Michael Kingston has warmly welcomed the strides made by the Irish government in its bid to become an observing nation of the Arctic Council.

After many years of lobbying, Mr Kingston noted the cabinet had finally approved Ireland's application this month.


Mr Kingston, a special advisor to the Arctic Council's protection of the arctic marine environment working group, raised the issue with Minister Simon Coveney in November 2017, setting out in detail the benefits of joining the Council.

Mr Kingston said it was essential that Ireland join as an observer, in order to gain the critical knowledge to help make informed decisions about climate change, including coastal erosion and flood defences, planning, agriculture, fisheries, and safety.

'We need the best information and we do not have that without speaking to our Arctic neighbours, whose region is going through fundamental changes that have a profound impact on our local weather systems,' he said.

Mr Kingston assisted in lobbying stakeholders, including harnessing the support in 2018 of the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, Kevin Vickers, and the Norwegian Ambassador, Else Berit Eikeland, as well as, during his work with the Arctic States, securing a trade mission to Ireland by the government of Maine in September 2018, who signed an economic partnership agreement with Cork County Council, demonstrating the economic benefits of attending Arctic Council meetings.


Mr Kingston told *The Southern Star* that 'given the escalation of climate issues on the government's agenda, and the UK's imminent departure from the EU, this new opportunity couldn't be more timely.' A decision on the application will be made in May.



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