

**In a sea of sunflowers**

Planting for the birds and the bees

Herald News Page 5



**Big clashes in c'ship**

Extensive football coverage

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# Parents may now pay for private buses

- Children sent on the bus regardless of ticket

By Mark Walsh

SOME households in Galway have been split between children who have been granted a bus ticket, and their sibling who have not.

The Government's decision to allow free school transport for this academic year has backfired spectacularly in the past week. Parents who had applied and paid for tickets in April ahead of the 2022/2023 school year, have been left in a situation where their children now don't have a valid ticket to travel to school, some of whom are Leaving Cert students who have been taking the school bus since First Year.

Eileen Fox's son, Matthew, started in Clarin College in Athenry this week. While Matthew's status is recorded as 'Eligible' to receive a ticket on

Bus Éireann's dedicated portal page, Matthew is yet to be sent out a valid bus ticket.

"I also have twin boys who are in Primary School, and they both have their tickets for the bus," said Eileen, who lives in Monivea.

"I can't be dropping my son off in Athenry at 8.30am and have him waiting around the town for school to start. I work in Calasancius College in Oranmore, and my husband is gone off to work at 6.30am.

"It is out of my way to have to go into Athenry, especially when the bus is passing by the door of the house."

Eileen was trying to get in touch with Bus Éireann last week and reported having to wait at least 50 minutes to talk to someone, prior to hanging up in frustration. Many local parents, whose children have yet to receive tickets, were

left with no other option but to send their kids on the bus this week. "I printed off what it says on the portal page for Matthew and gave it to him to bring with him. It showed his name and that he was eligible for a ticket, and I told him to show it to an inspector if he was asked. "I had been onto Seán Canney's secretary and she told me to phone them if Matthew had any issues.

"There are a few students up our road who go to the Presentation College in Athenry, and they don't have tickets yet. On our road altogether, about three of 15 kids have tickets."

Some 215 students have entered First Year in Clarin College, and there are up to 800 students in the school altogether.

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**TEAS AND TREATS AT WILLIAMSTOWN**



BEHIND every great project there is a band of usually unsung heroes who are women. These women gave tea and treats to all in attendance at Williamstown Heritage Day at Templetogether Mill on Sunday. They are (back) Chris Lennon and Una Finnegan and (front) Margaret Kirrane and Mary Feeney, all of Williamstown.

PHOTO: MARY RYAN

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