

DICK ROCHE

RAISING THE ISSUES. GETTING RESULTS. WORKING FOR YOU.

LOCAL NEWSLETTER

8/2006

Dear Constituent,

The year to date has been an incredibly busy and positive period for the country in general and for the Constituency in particular.

Hardly a working day goes by without some decision being made that will have an impact on all of our lives.

In this Newsletter I outline some of the decisions and announcements in which I have been involved both as your Dail representative and as the Cabinet member responsible for Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

The schemes, major & minor, that I have been in the happy position to approve will make a real difference when they come into effect. They will play a major role in improving living conditions and will also play a vital role in job creation and in building on the prosperity of our County and Country is currently enjoying.

I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter. As always I would welcome your suggestions as to topics that you would like to see covered in future Newsletters.

Finally if I can be of assistance to you or to your family or friends do not hesitate to contact me at my Constituency Office at 2 Herbert Tce. Bray phone (01) 2863211, at the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Custom House, Dublin 1, phone (01) 8882000, at any of my 'Constituency Clinics' or by e-mail at dick.roche@oireachtas.ie .



Dick Roche, TD

Minister for the Environment,
Heritage & Local Government

You can also contact Dick by phone, fax or e-mail at any of the following addresses:

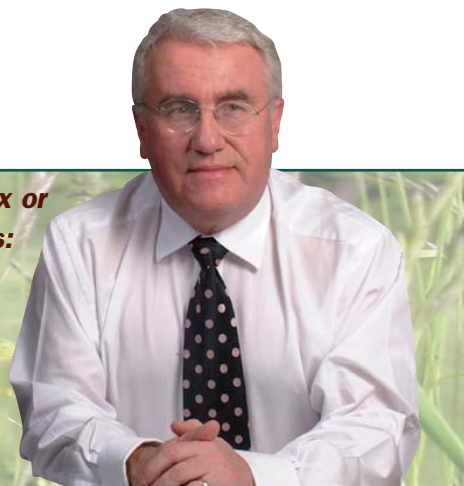
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ROCHE PROVIDES MORE FUNDING FOR PLAYGROUNDS



At the opening of the Newcastle Community Playground, paid tribute to the Newcastle community who have been working, in conjunction with Wicklow Co. Council, on the provision of a playground for their area since early 2005.

Minister Roche has doubled the funding for the provision of playgrounds in County Wicklow to €120,000 for 2006. Nationally Dick has allocated record funding of over €4m for the provision of playground facilities in 2006. Each City and County Council will receive a 100% increase on the amount provided in 2005. Councils may use the funding to provide playgrounds at up to four locations.

SPECIAL FUNDING FOR BRAY RAPID AREAS

In addition to the funding from Minister Dick Roche for County Council playgrounds, Bray is to receive €66,000 to support the development of new playgrounds and the refurbishment of existing playgrounds under the Government's RAPID scheme. Bray Town Council will consult with each RAPID Area Implementation Team to agree the precise nature and location of the works to be undertaken.

NATIONAL SMOKE ALARM SCHEME LAUNCHED

Minister Roche has launched a National Pilot Project for the installation of smoke alarms. Research has indicated that 1 in 5 Irish homes have no working smoke alarm.

Under the scheme, local authorities will, with the assistance of the voluntary sector identify those 'vulnerable households' where there are no smoke alarms and will arrange for the supply and installation of two smoke alarms in home. 2500 households will be dealt in 10 locations throughout the country under the pilot scheme. The Government will pay the costs of the local authorities.



FUNDING FOR CENTRAL HEATING PROGRAMME

Dick has allocated over €1.15 m in Government funding to Wicklow Local Authorities under the 2006 Central Heating Programme. The scheme provides for the installation of central heating, energy conservation facilities and smoke detection measures in Council owned houses.

The Minister said, "I am acutely aware of the hardship faced by the elderly and other vulnerable groups during the cold winter months. I am asking the Councils to make sure that this year's funding is fully drawn down and used effectively."

For a full list of Dick Ro

ENNISKERRY WATER SUPPLY SHAMBLES

Minister Roche has branded the ongoing problems with the Enniskerry Water System as 'a shambles' and has called for an explanation as to why funding that has been set aside for improvement works will not be drawn down by the Council until next year. Minister Roche who has set aside funding to upgrade the Enniskerry Water Scheme, which also services part of the Kilmacanogue area, has initiated an examination as to the delay in the Council bringing the Scheme and has urged local Councillors to press the council to 'inject a greater sense of urgency' into resolving the ongoing problems. "The money is there and there is no reason why in this day and age the people of Enniskerry should have to tolerate the disruptions seen in recent months", Minister Roche said.

CONSULTATION ON WASTE REGULATION

Minister Roche has initiated a public consultation on the appointment of a Waste Regulator and the future regulation of the waste collection service industry. Publishing a consultation paper Minister Roche said, "unlike other sectors, the waste industry has no independent regulator. It is time to consider whether an independent regulation is warranted and the form that regulation should take."

Members of the public are invited to make submissions to the Department of the Environment, Custom House, Dublin 1 or by e-mail on wasteregulation@environ.ie. Submissions should be made by Friday 6th October 2006.



€40m FOR LOCAL HOUSING SCHEMES



Since becoming Minister for the Environment Dick Roche has allocated record funding housing services in Wicklow. This year the County has been allocated €40m budget for housing. The results of this record funding are now evident throughout the County.

Recently Minister officially opened three new housing schemes in Avoca, Barndarrig and Newtownmountkennedy. Taken together,

the developments consist of 111 houses, made up of 87 local authority houses and 24 affordable houses, and were provided at a cost of just over €14 million.

In July Dick approved proposals for 64 new social & affordable houses in Arklow and for 54 new homes at Farrankelly, Delgany

WE DELIVER

The Government has made unprecedented investments in Wicklow - through the good offices of Minister Roche. Funding for new housing, for roads, for the swimming pools in Bray & Greystones, for Bray's new recycling centre and for playgrounds. Fine Gael nationally have been critical of the level of support for projects in Wicklow, ironically that party is trying to claim credit for the projects locally.

GOOD NEWS FOR NORTH WICKLOW SCHOOLS

As mentioned in earlier Newsletters, this Government has sanctioned or funded more new schools or school expansions in every part of Wicklow than any other Government in the history of the State. This list is growing virtually by the month.

In April a new secondary school for Bray's Presentation College. The project can go to tender and construction completed over the next 12 - 15 months.

Four weeks later approval was given for a Sports Hall at Loreto Secondary School, Bray, a project on which Dick has been campaigning for years.

The good news for 'Pres' and Loreto comes on top of good news for other schools in the County including, a new national school for Powerscourt School, Enniskerry, an extension for Saint Brendan's College, Woodbrook, Bray and a new 16 room primary school for Blessington, to mention just a few



NEW DEAL FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

This Government has increased funding for Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs Grant Schemes dramatically. Capital funding for the schemes from 2000 to 2005 totalled some €336 million with almost 45,600 grants paid. The Government has agreed to a proposal from Minister Roche to allocate €65 million for the Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs Grant Schemes. The Minister has allocated an additional €7m to make local authority rented houses more accessible bringing the total expenditure in this area to €72 million.

In addition to the record funding, in July Minister Roche joined with the Taoiseach and other key Ministers launched the Government's National Disability Strategy. Proposals put forward by Dick under the Programme will include: -

- A major review of the Building Regulations governing access for people with disabilities.
- The development of a new Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities.
- Improvements in accessibility to the streetscapes, services, information, public buildings, facilities and amenities under Local Authority control.
- New local authority services and built facilities will be accessible to people with disabilities, with access built into plans and designs from inception to completion.
- Disability Access Certification for new commercial buildings and apartment blocks.
- An overhaul of the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme.

REJOINING BRAY & ENNISKERRY

The upgrading of the N11 and the building of Bray By-pass 'severed' the link between Bray & Enniskerry for pedestrians. The link will be re-established shortly. The Government through the National Roads Authority has given Wicklow County Council permission to award the contract for a new footbridge at the Enniskerry junction. The footbridge will cross the motorway just below the Herbert Road Junction with the N11. Contracts will be signed before the end of this year.

BRINGING BRAY WANDERERS TO UEFA STANDARDS

Bray Wanderers Football Club is being granted €385,000 under the Government's Sports Capital Programme. This funding is for Phase 2 of the club's development programme, which includes new changing rooms, new terracing, and the installation of a canopy to cover seating. This brings the total Government funding for Bray Wanderers under the programme to €1,013,948 – a huge boost for facilities in Bray.

"This is a very welcome boost for Bray Wanderers. The improved facilities will allow the club to meet UEFA Licensing regulations, an essential requirement if the club is to compete at the top level as we all wish" – Dick said.

DICK THROWS HIS WEIGHT BEHIND THIRD LEVEL PROJECT

When the County Council decided to purchase of Clermont Convent in Rathnew, with a view to promoting it as an outreach third level centre it got very practical support from Minister Roche who provided the Council with the necessary sanction to raise loan capital of €9million for the purchase. Minister Roche, a long-term supporter of a third level outreach centre for Wicklow has indicated the he will give the Rathnew project every possible support.

GOVERNMENT MOVES TO THE 'GARDEN COUNTY'



The Cabinet meeting in Avondale House on 31 July was the first ever formal meeting of the Cabinet held in Co. Wicklow. The historic meeting was held to mark the 400th anniversary of Wicklow as an administrative county.

MORE LAND FOR WICKLOW NATIONAL PARK

Minister Roche has announced the State is to buy an area roughly the same size as the Phoenix Park in Dublin (1,602 acres) to add to the Wicklow Mountains National Park. The additional land brings the area of Wicklow National Park to 17,650 hectares. The deal links the two previously separated parts of Wicklow Mountains National Park giving a continuous Park from the Feather Beds on the Dublin Border to just short of Lugnaquilla Mountain. This acquisition consolidates existing public access to the National Park a matter of particular interest to hill walkers.

GRANTS FOR GREENER HOMES

The Government has launched a grant scheme that will allow individual householders, for the first time ever, to obtain grants for the installation of renewable technologies including wood pellet stoves and boilers, solar panels and geothermal heat pumps. Grant aid of €1,100 to €6,500 will be provided depending on the individual technology used. The "Greener Homes" Scheme is administered by Sustainable Energy Ireland. Details and application forms are available on the SEI's website (www.sei.ie/greenerhomes). Details are also available from a dedicated low-call phone line (ph: 1850 SEI SEI / 1850 734 734).

CHILDCARE FUNDING FOR BRAY CENTRE

Minister Roche recently confirmed funding of €97,200 for a new Childcare facility at Ballywaltrim Community Centre in Bray. The new service opens in September 2006. 50 families will benefit from this new arrangement, with a new pre-school facility and after school care to compliment the existing home work club already run by the Marian Centre in Ballywaltrim.

**WHO
WILL
PAY ?**

Proposals put forward by Fine Gael & Labour over the last two years have been costed. The bill for the taxpayers would come to €11 billion plus. They haven't said what new taxes they intend charging you to pay for their election - and they won't.

BRAY & GREYSTONES SWIMMING POOLS

After a long campaign by Minister Roche Greystones and Bray Swimming Pool projects have been approved in the Minister of Arts, Sport and Tourism to go to tender. Government first allocated funding to the local Councils almost 3 years ago for both swimming pools.

The announcement puts Wicklow in the unique position of winning Government funding for four publicly owned swimming pools since Fianna Fail returned to office in 1997. No other County in Ireland can beat that record.

NOISE POLLUTION

We live in an increasingly noisy world. Noise pollution is serious environmental issue. Excessive noise can be a very significant problem for people.

New Irish Regulations to give effect to an EU Directive on noise pollution have been signed into effect by Minister Roche. The new Regulations define environmental noise as 'unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise emitted by means of transport, road traffic, rail traffic, air traffic, and from sites of industrial activity'. The Regulations are aimed at managing overall noise in major urban areas and around major national infrastructure, and protecting quiet areas for the benefit of everyone.

CHEWING GUM CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN BRAY

Bray has been selected as one of three locations in Ireland for a pilot campaign to combat chewing gum litter. Under an agreement concluded by Minister Roche the chewing gum industry will fund awareness campaigns and education programmes aimed at encouraging chewing gum users to dispose of gum responsibly. The scheme will run for an initial period of three-years. The Chewing Gum industry will contribute about €6 million to the campaign.

In addition the Wrigley Company will fund a research programme in an Irish Third Level Institution to study the adhesion qualities of gum.

NEW MEANS TEST LIMITS FOR GP VISIT CARD

In June the Government announced that the basic income guidelines for the GP Visit Card are to be increased making more people than ever eligible. Full details of the Scheme and the new rates are available from your local health clinic, on the Citizens Information Online Service website www.oasis.ie or the HSE website. Applications can be made at HSE local offices. If you have any problem getting the information you need, ring Dick Roche (01) 2863211

HOUSING REFURBISHMENT SCHEMES

Dick recently approved proposals to undertake work on the first phase of the regeneration of the Fassaroe Estate beginning in Ashlawn Court.

"I was very pleased to give approval to start construction works on this major regeneration scheme. I have already committed the necessary capital funding for the project. The regeneration of Fassaroe estate has been one of my highest priorities as Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and I am pleased that we are now getting regeneration activity on site at local level."



The recently completed James Everett Refurbishment Scheme at a cost of €1.7m

The proposed refurbishment works to the houses in this phase include the installation of central heating, replacement of windows and doors, rewiring, insulation of roof areas, replacing eaves, gutters and down pipes, and internal decoration.

BRAY RECYCLING CENTRE NOW OPEN

I am delighted that Wicklow County Council has now opened its new Recycling Centre in Bray at Beechwood Close, off the Boghall Road. The centre also has a unique feature with an Education and Awareness Facility. This will work with local schools and organisations in promoting recycling and alternative ways of reducing waste.

Last September I was delighted to have been in position as Minister to provide funding in the order of €1m for the Bray Recycling Facility. I whole-heartedly welcome the fact that it is now open to the public.

I know there is a huge interest amongst the public in recycling. That interest had been frustrated in North East Wicklow by the lack of a suitable centre. Now we have our new centre.

