

DICK ROCHE

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RAISING THE ISSUES. GETTING RESULTS. WORKING FOR YOU.

LOCAL NEWSLETTER WEST WICKLOW

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 that 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.

Le gach dea ghúí



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:

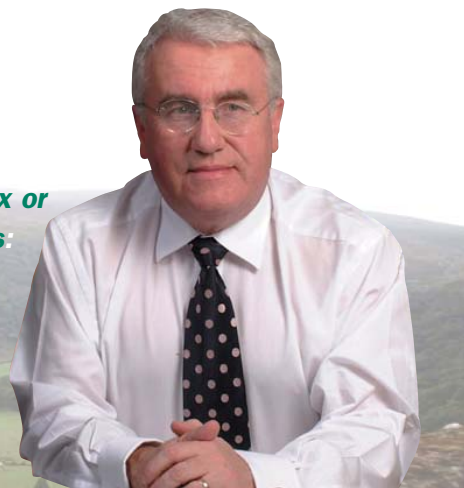
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FIANNA FÁIL
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SPORTS CLUBS



Local Sports Clubs throughout Wicklow have benefited substantially from investment under the Capital Sports Programme.

Since 1999 over €10 million has been poured into County Wicklow to assist a range of Sports Clubs in developing their premises.

In West Wicklow, GAA Clubs such as Hollywood Shamrocks, Donard/Glen, Baltinglass, Kiltegan, Dunlavin, Blessington, Vallemount have benefited from over €1.9 million, while funding is also being provided to Hollywood Community Development Association, Blessington Sailing Club, Grangecon Community Association and Grangecon Boxing Club.

“The development of top class facilities within our Community is essential to encourage as many people as possible to participate actively in sport.

Funding that has been provided through the National Lottery in West Wicklow has allowed local organisations to improve their premises and develop the range of activities that they carry out in their communities”, said Dick.



40 MILLION FOR LOCAL HOUSING SCHEMES



Since becoming the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dick Roche has allocated a record funding for housing services in Co. Wicklow. This year an unprecedented amount of €40 million has been allocated for new housing. Results of this record funding are now evident throughout the County.

Recently Dick opened new housing Schemes in Avoca, Bardarrig, Newtownmountkennedy. Proposals have been recently approved for new houses in Arklow, Delgany and Bray. Works are well underway on the 40 house scheme at Blessington and a 42 housing scheme of a mixture of housing units at Lathaleer in Baltinglass.

“These Schemes are practical proof of the Government’s commitment to meet the housing needs of people in Co. Wicklow. Wicklow local authorities have been given the resources they need to drive their housing programme and I will be expecting to see delivery on that Programme” said Minister Roche.

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

CLAMP DOWN ON ILLEGAL DUMPS

Long before becoming Minister for the Environment Dick Roche campaigned against illegal dumping throughout County Wicklow. In May 2005 Dick issued a Direction under the Waste Management Act setting out new requirements to be applied to lands that had been the subject of illegal or unauthorised dumping. While the Ministerial Direction has national application it has had a very significant effect on two landmark cases in West Wicklow.

In February the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) required Roadstone Dublin Ltd to carry out a full remediation of the illegal dumping site on its lands in Blessington.

The EPA refused the company's application for a landfill licence on the site and required that potentially polluting wastes would have to be excavated, processed and removed to authorised facilities elsewhere. The remediation work is now underway.

The second landmark decision was made in April when the EPA refused an application for a landfill licence in respect of the site at Whitestown.

Both decisions directly reflect the policy Direction issued by Minister Roche



You can help to stamp out illegal dumping – use Office of Environmental Enforcement's Illegal Dumping Line (1850 365 121) to Pinpoint the Polluter

ROCHE ALLOCATES €5.5M FOR WICKOW RURAL WATER SERVICES

Under the National Rural Water Programme for 2006 Wicklow will receive €5.5m for Rural Water Services. The 2006 Wicklow allocation is more than 11 times the amount provided by the Fine Gael & Labour Government in 1997.

Every part of the County will benefit. The funding will

- Provide for improvements to public water supply schemes Enniskerry, Aughrim, Avoca/Ballinaclsh and Redcross.
- New water treatment plants for Ballyknockan, Barnadarrig, Ballycooge, Coolboy/Coolfancy, Donard, Grangecon, Hollywood, Kiltegan, Kirakee, Knockananna, Knockanarrigan, Rathdangan, Stratford, Thomastown, Vallemount, Ballingate, Askinagap, Baltyboys and Humphreystown
- Connection to the Council's water supply for Cornagower, Tombrean/Umrygar, Tomacork, Kilacloran, Blainroe, Manor Kilbride, Old Court, Hempstown and Tinode schemes; Crossbridge and Rossbane schemes will become the responsibility of the Council,
- Allow for the construction of new schemes serving Brittas Bay, Stranakelly, Ballynerin, Glendalough and Killadreenan. Blakestown, Raheen and Little Newtown schemes will be upgraded.

An allocation of €1m is being made in respect of small public water and sewerage schemes for Knockroe/Priestnewtown, Stratford, Ballycooge, Glenealy, Ballinaclash and Barnadarrig.

Minister Roche was congratulated by the President of the National Federation of Group Water Schemes for the massive increase in funding for rural water systems.

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

Roche's Constituency Clinics please tel



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 in launching 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.**

LOCAL SCHOOLS

€2 million has been made available to schools throughout Wicklow to carry out necessary improvement and upgrading works during the summer months in advance of the new school year. Grangecon National School, Rathcoyle National School and St. Kevin's Community College, Dunlavin have all benefited from this investment. Further funding has also been approved for Donaghmore National School and Blessington Community College for extensions to the existing buildings under the devolved programme which speeds up the delivery of works to the local schools. Two new primary schools in Blessington, Tigh na nOg - Educate Together National School and Gaelscoil na Lochanna have also been recognised following an intensive campaign by Dick.

Dick was also delighted to join with the Board of Management and local community in Blessington at the turning of the sod on the new 16 classroom school for St. Mary's National School in Blessington. Works are progressing well, and new pupils should be welcomed to the school next year.

NEW LIBRARY FOR BLESSINGTON



Last November, Minister Roche officially opened the new €1.7 million Library in Blessington. This new facility will add significantly to the existing library infrastructure in the County. There are already libraries in Wicklow Town, Bray, Greystones and Arklow. This new facility will ensure a better geographic spread of the library service.

ROCHE PROVIDES MORE FUNDING FOR PLAYGROUNDS



Minister Roche at the new playground in Blessington

Minsiter 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.

LOCAL HERITAGE

Almost €750,000 has been provided by Minister Roche for Heritage and Architectural Projects in Wicklow.

A number of Projects across Wicklow will be supported by this initiative which will help encourage pride in our local heritage. The Government continues to be committed to the protection and restoration of our architectural heritage in Co. Wicklow. An important element of the Programme is supporting Projects at a number of significant heritage properties which are open to the public, held in Trust or private ownership. Minister Roche was particularly pleased to allocate funding of €400,000 to Russborough House.

In addition to funding made available, heritage protection is also supported by the valuable work of the Heritage Council who arrange specific Programmes administered by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

NATIONAL SMOKE ALARM SCHEME LAUNCHED

A National Pilot Project for the installation of smoke alarms has been launched by Minister Roche in Greystones at the end of July. The Pilot Scheme arises from research commissioned by Minister Roche which indicated that 20% of Irish households 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 each such household. 2,500 households will be dealt in 10 locations throughout the country under the pilot scheme. The Government will pay the costs of the local authorities.

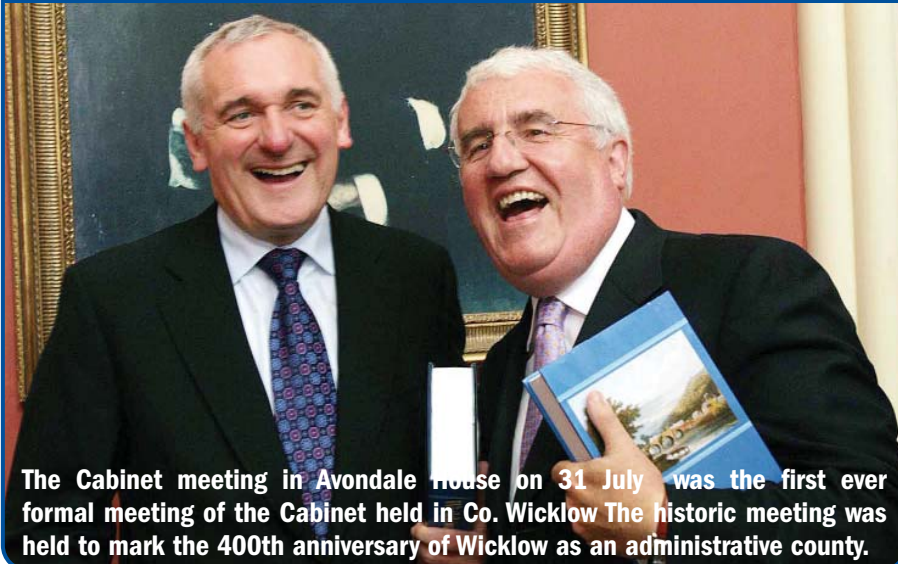
The Pilot Scheme will run until the end of October 2006, and a review of its effectiveness will then be carried out in consultation with the participating local authorities with a view to extending it nationwide next year.



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. 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)

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.

ROCHE ALLOCATES RECORD ROADS FUND FOR WICKLOW ROADS

Dick Roche has allocated almost €21m for Wicklow's County and Non National roads for 2007. This is the largest ever funding for County Roads in Wicklow. In 1997 the total funding for roads in County Wicklow, under Fine Gael and Labour was less than €5m. In addition to Government Funding Wicklow County Council also has money available from development contributions for local road improvements.

Minister Roche has also secured new funding for the N81. Under the 2007 programme €1.52m has been allocated for improvements at Hangmans Bends, Knockroe, Annalecky to Drumreagh and Blessington Main Street.

"There is no excuse for poor roads in any part of Wicklow, given the level of funding for roads and footpaths that are available to the Councils" Minister Roche said.

PUBLIC LIGHTING IN WEST WICKLOW

Minister Dick Roche has asked the County Council management to be more attentive to the matter of public lighting in West Wicklow. "Wicklow County Council has received record funding from the Government in recent times. The Council has also seen a very welcome improvement in its own internal receipts from commercial rates and other sources. This income will increase as the level of business in Wicklow grows. The Council has also received almost €50 million in the last few years by way of development contributions. A significant amount of the increased funding flowing into the coffers of Wicklow County Council arises from development in West Wicklow. Against this background the very paltry allocation of funding for public lighting is disappointing. There is no reason why local Councillors should settle for a paltry funding for public lighting in their areas given the volume of revenue which is flowing into the Council. The level of development in West Wicklow has been particularly striking in recent times. Investment in public facilities including lighting should reflect that positive pace of development", Minister Roche said.

NOISE POLLUTION

We live in an increasingly noisy world. Noise pollution is a 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.