

eContact



Sligo Local Authorities eNewsletter

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TEACH LAIGHNE Wins Disability Access Award

The National Disability Authority recently presented Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry with an 'Excellence Through Accessibility' Award.



Attending a photocall at Teach Laighne to mark this achievement were (l-r) Councillor Jerry Lundy, Councillor Margaret Gormley, Minister Jimmy Devins TD, James Walshe, Sligo County Council, Cathaoirleach Councillor Seamus Kilgannon, Ms. Helen Rochford Brennan

CIVIL DEFENCE PLAYS VITAL ROLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Civil Defence Board's 'Statement of Strategy 2007-2010' sets out the key objectives and operational environment for the organisation. Director General Bill Smith envisages 'an exciting and challenging agenda' for the board in the years ahead, and this is reflected at local level in the wide range of activities undertaken by County Sligo Civil Defence.

In 2007 Civil Defence was present at almost seventy events with May to September being the busiest time. Civil Defence attended Gymkhanas, Triathlons, Golf tournaments, major sporting fixtures, Charity swims, Musical festivals, Horse Shows, and Car Rallies.

The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Seamus Kilgannon commended the Civil Defence Teams for their valuable work in the community. 'The Civil Defence organisation is widely respected, and has attracted many plaudits for the efficient and professional way they carry out their duties.'

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Sligo Civil Defence not only cover community events but are constantly preparing to respond to emergency situations. Civil Defence has been given a specific role within the Major Emergency framework document and are attending training in order to be in a position of readiness if and when an emergency situation would arise.

Sligo Civil Defence has a core group of over sixty personnel willing and committed to volunteer at short notice and a further twenty or so available in the event of a major emergency. The volunteers enjoy the training programme and are anxious to put their training into practice.

The Civil Defence team strives to ensure that training is informative and varied, and volunteers acquire skills they often retain for the rest of their lives.

At a presentation to long serving members of Sligo Civil Defence, the Cathaoirleach emphasised the valued role of the volunteer in our community: 'Volunteerism has been the backdrop to the social and economic history of Ireland. Particularly in times of economic uncertainty, where ambition was tempered by scarcity of finance, our society relied heavily on the goodwill of the volunteer. While the economic landscape has been transformed, the tradition and culture of volunteerism has been maintained.

While it is not in these volunteers nature to proclaim their role or achievements, it is important to convey the universal regard in which they are held by every sector of our community.'

2008 PLANNER - A BUSY YEAR AHEAD FOR CIVIL DEFENCE

- Initiate a recruitment programme for new volunteers and deliver a flexible organisation of volunteers through upgraded multi-skill training
- Upgrade boat volunteers to meet the new regulations.
- To commence a risk assessment of all slipways of the county in conjunction with Sligo County Council Safety Officer
- Review and update the emergency accommodation list for the county, including community centres and schools which can be utilised as emergency accommodation centres.
- Continue to meet the needs of the community through assisting with the necessary cover ie. first aid / stewarding/ crowd control for local events and in emergency situations
- Encourage interactive training sessions with neighbouring Civil Defence Authorities and with all the

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local volunteer emergency services through a programme of training events.

- Liaise with the Health Service Executive and Gardai to plan and organise simulated major emergencies in accordance with the requirements of the Framework for Emergency Planning document.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Anyone considering carrying out valuable service to their local community should explore the possibility of becoming a Civil Defence volunteer. A multi-skilled training programme is currently underway in venues throughout the county, and volunteers will be instructed in First Aid, Rescue, Communications, welfare and a range of other useful skills.

To find out more about becoming a Civil Defence Volunteer, contact the Sligo Civil Defence Office at 071 9142702

SLIGO PODCAST... A FIRST FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Sligo Local Authorities have introduced a podcast facility to their websites which will allow people access a broadcast of news and information on-line. The facility was launched before Christmas, and was attended by the Mayor Councillor Jonathan McGoldrick, Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Martin Baker, Chairman of the Sligo branch of People with Disabilities, Ireland (PWDI), Brian Crummy and Mr. Bob Murphy, Manager Assistive Technology Unit HSE West.

The first broadcast in the series featured a road safety message, seasonal environmental



Mayor Cllr Jonathan McGoldrick, Mr. Brian Crummy, Chairman of the Sligo branch of People with Disabilities, Ireland (PWDI), Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr Martin Baker, Mr. Bob Murphy, Manager Assistive Technology Unit HSE West and Guide Dog Nestor



tips, emergency contact numbers for the Christmas holidays, advice on fire safety in the home, together with a preview of the major projects planned by the Sligo Local Authorities for 2008. The current podcast includes interviews with Sligo Local Authorities' Heritage Officer Siobhán Ryan and Civil Defence Officer Marion Davis, and a feature on Teach Laighne, Sligo County Council Offices in Tubbercurry.

Mayor Councillor Jonathan McGoldrick sees the facility as an opportunity to deliver news to a wider audience. 'An



Mr. Brian Crummy, Chairman of the Sligo branch of People with Disabilities, Ireland (PWDI),
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and Guide Dog Nestor



Mayor, Cathaoirleach and Councillors at the launch of the Local Authorities Podcast

increasing number of people access news and entertainment on-line, and the launch of our podcast enables us to deliver important public service information to a listening audience.'

Brian Crummy, Chairman of Sligo branch of People with Disabilities Ireland (PWDI) sees the podcast 'as a very welcome initiative which will be a valuable resource for people with disabilities who wish to access information in this medium. Sligo Local Authorities already produce an audio-file CD of their quarterly magazine and other important publications, and the podcast is an excellent

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Mayor and Leas Cathaoirleach with 'Podcast production team'

addition to their range of information services in the area of assistive technology.'

The production of the podcast and the training of the Sligo Local Authorities project team was delivered by All Points West, managed by Jho Harris and Sinéad McClure. According to Sinead "Having worked in the broadcast sector for many years and been involved in teaching radio skills to a number of groups in Sligo and beyond, All Points West Media Services consider the vehicle of broadcast though the internet in the form of podcasting to be a very useful tool."

OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The pupils of St Mary's Secondary School in Ballisodare attended County Hall recently as our guests under our 'Open Local Government' programme.



They were given a presentation on the aims and objectives of their local authority, and then attended a full meeting of the Council. Cathaoirleach Councillor Seamus Kilgannon feels the programme 'as very beneficial in terms of introducing our young people to the concept of local democracy.'



Sligo Fire Service takes a **SOFT APPROACH**



Distressed children at the scene of road traffic collisions and other incidents across Sligo are set to be comforted and relaxed - thanks to a new initiative of special trauma teddies to be used by Sligo Fire Service. All front-line fire tenders in Sligo will soon have access to a unique piece of equipment which could reduce the suffering of children at operational incidents - a **Trauma Teddy Bear!**



Over 100 cuddly teddy bears have become part of the team, assigned to a very important task. The bears ride on every frontline fire tender in Sligo. The Teddy's are part of an initiative to help children during traumatic emergency situations.

"The importance at any emergency scene is to help people remain calm and help ease the trauma of such a sudden event, this is most important when dealing with young children" stated Tom O'Boyle Station Officer Sligo Fire Brigade.

The intention is primarily to help alleviate the suffering of children at incidents and to help children cope with the stress that they feel from their involvement in a traumatic event. When children are involved in emergencies, it can be a traumatic experience for them. In order to soften the impact that an emergency may have on our children we have implemented this new "Trauma Bear" initiative. We hope to change their focus to a comforting object during a difficult situation.

Co-ordinating this initiative is Paul Ryan, Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Sligo Fire Service. We hope that situations in which we will utilise these bears will be few, but we are pleased to be prepared to make a difference in the lives of our children.

According to Mr. Ryan: *"The children may not necessarily be injured; it may be that they are witnesses to an incident that causes distress. It is often hard to predict how drivers, passengers or pedestrians will cope with being involved in road traffic collisions and children are*

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particularly affected. We want to do all that we can to alleviate the distress caused by collisions on our roads. The trauma bears will also be used to assist fire personnel in any situation where they may calm children and assist fire personnel in their duties. The Trauma Bear will be given to the child to keep. To ensure their maximum effectiveness they will be used only in exceptional circumstances, the teddy bears may not be given out at every incident but they will be deployed where the fire personnel considers it to be appropriate. The trauma teddies we hope will be very helpful and the teddies have been greatly appreciated by those children who have already adopted and benefited from them in other counties."

The cute teddy bears - called **Tango Bear** - have been delivered to all Sligo Fire Stations for use on each fire tender.

The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Seamus Kilgannon paid tribute to the staff of the Sligo Fire Service. 'The personnel in our Fire Service and indeed the other front-line emergency services provide an invaluable service to our community, and they are to be commended in devising this initiative.'



Tango the trauma Teddy are the new recruits to Sligo Fire Service, welcomed here by (Left to right): Joe McCole, Paul Ryan, Tom O'Boyle and Brendan Henry

RENT FREE MONTH

The draw for the Rent Free Month took place in December 2007 for Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council.

The 40 winners were presented with their free rent certificates by the Mayor Cllr Jonathan McGoldrick and the Cathaoirleach Cllr Seamus Kilgannon at presentation ceremonies held at Sligo Borough Council Offices, City Hall.

Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council were delighted with the uptake and huge success of the competition. The number of tenants who have brought their rent accounts up to date since the introduction of this offer has been significant. This has made it possible for the Local Authority to complete more house repairs and help to provide housing for those on our housing list. The more tenants who keep their rents paid up to date, the more we will be in a position to continue this work for the future generations.

Regrettably Sligo Local Authorities have also had to initiated Legal Proceedings for recovery of amounts due despite all our efforts to reach agreements with tenants.

On a number of occasions, Sligo Local Authorities have had no option but to repossess properties where there is an absolute refusal by a Tenant to address the situation.



However, Legal Action is taken only in cases where all other avenues of recovery of amounts due have been exhausted.

Tenants are advised to contact the Local Authorities or the Money Advice and Budgeting Service if they are experiencing difficulty with payments as both Authorities will facilitate payment of arrears by instalments. The sooner the matter of arrears is dealt with, the easier it is to solve the problem.

The service offered by the Money Advice and Budgeting Service is free and confidential and many of our tenants who have contacted MABS speak highly of the service they have received. In 2007 we were delighted to avail of the

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services of Focus Ireland, John Street Sligo, and they were of great help to some of our tenants who were having difficulties in paying arrears.

Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council would like to thank everyone who participated in the *Rent free* draw during 2007 and would encourage more tenants to participate this year.

Western Drama Festival Honoured

The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Seamus Kilgannon has honoured the committee of the Western Drama festival with a reception at the Council's offices at Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry.



The reception, which was attended by Minister Jimmy Devins and local Councillors, was held to mark the 65th anniversary celebrations of the festival.

In his address the Cathaoirleach noted that the *“Western Drama Festival play a hugely important role in this community, and for 65 years they have entertained and enthralled people year after year. The genesis of the festival was in the days before television and global communications, where people depended largely on their own community for diversion and entertainment. Generations of people from Tubbercurry and south Sligo have either graced the stage at the Western Drama Festival, or have been one of the many people who have attended one of the performances over the years”*

The Cathaoirleach went on to praise the staff of Teach Laighne by saying what an important facility it is for Sligo County Council, *“a few moments ago I had the honour of welcoming Minister Devins to these offices. Minister Devins kindly joined us to attend a photocall to mark the presentation of the ‘Excellence through Accessibility’ award by the National Disability Authority. This achievement reflects great credit on James Walshe and the staff of Teach Laighne, and indeed the local councillors who worked for many years on the planning and delivery of this excellent facility for South Sligo.”*

Sligo County Community Forum Training Programme

Sligo County Community Forum was pleased to be able to offer community & voluntary groups in County Sligo a best practice Training Programme. The Forum was encouraged with the feedback received, those who attended gained from the nights training with Áine Egan, Community Research & Facilitation.

The Training Programme involved discussions on: ***Why are people afraid of committees?***; Difference approaches to encouraging participation; Presentation on key legal and governance issues for voluntary activists; Having a Constitution, Articles of Association, the new charities bill; Roles & Responsibilities with Committee structures: Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Public Relations Officer; Managing a meeting: process (atmosphere) and tasks (agenda); Group Discussions and Resource Packs were given out on the night. We have a few packs remaining.



Sligo County Community Forum would like to thank Co. Sligo LEADER Partnership Co. Ltd. who supported the Training Programme and The Wheel for providing '***Solid Foundations***' publications to all groups who attended the training programme.

Future Dates for your Diaries:

Monday 18th February—Tubbercurry

An evenings discussion on Social Integration

Wednesday 26th March—Sligo Town

Revitalising Communities. An evening with Fr. Sean Healy, Sr. Bridget Reynolds from CORI and Seamus Boland from Irish Rural Link.

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Sligo County Community Forum recently held an informative Seminar in the Radisson SAS Hotel. The theme was “Funding opportunities available to community & voluntary groups”. The Forum hopes that the 70 groups who attended gained from the information provided and from the expert speakers present.

These included:

Office of Community & Enterprise, Sligo Co. Co. (Rita McNulty), **Sligo LEADER Partnership Co.** (Chris Gonley) **POBAL** (Fina Golden), **Sligo County Childcare Committee** (Roísín McGlone) and **Sligo Sports & Recreation Partnership** (Deirdre Lavin).

Some of the feedback from members who attended on the day included: “great overall view on what is available and a very well organised programme”, “It provided a very good broad overview as to what sources of funding are available, all speakers were excellent and the atmosphere was open and welcoming”. The Forum was pleased with the reaction of the community & voluntary groups regarding the Seminar and hope to continue to be able to provide these informative days for the registered members.

The Health Awareness meeting which took place in Cliffoney Hall, and was well attended.

Presentations were made by the following agencies:

- **The Health Promotion Office, NWHSE** (Ann Lawlor, Siobhan McGuinness and Geraldine DeLorey),
- **Sligo Branch of the Irish Heart Foundation** (Eugene MacHale),
- **Sligo Sports & Recreation Partnership** (Shane Hayes),
- **Community Alert, Muintir na Tire** (Vanessa Clarke, Development Officer, Northern Region) and
- **Domestic Violence Advocacy Service for Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan** (Niamh Wilson, Manager).
- **Diabetes Federation of Ireland** (Mae McConnell) was also in attendance and gave details of this organisations work.



The Forum was pleased with the attendance and participation by members of local community & voluntary groups.

Financial Regulator announces free access to online cost comparisons in Sligo libraries

The Financial Regulator and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) recently announced the availability of free internet access to the www.itsyourmoney.ie site in all Sligo libraries which will help consumers make informed personal finance decisions and shop around for financial products.

The Financial Regulator's cost comparisons, which are available at www.itsyourmoney.ie show the cost and benefits of a range of insurance and banking products and help consumers find out where they can get the product that suits them best.

Consumer Director, Mary O'Dea said, "We launched our new website www.itsyourmoney.ie in September last year and our cost comparisons for financial products are now available online, helping people to shop around and save money at the touch of a button. We want to make sure that people can access our website, regardless of whether they have internet access at home, or in work, and this free internet service at their local libraries means that they can."



Fran Hegarty, Executive Librarian, Sligo County Council demonstrating the financial regulator's website to Cathaoirleach Cllr Seamus Kilgannon

Norma McDermott, Director of the Library Council, pointed to the public library's unique place in communities throughout the country. "Public libraries welcome over 14 million visitors and provide 1.7 million internet sessions each year. We are delighted to work with the Financial Regulator in encouraging people to use the internet service in their local library. Contact your local library to find out about internet access there."

The Financial Regulator's cost comparisons show potential savings when comparing the cost of financial products between different providers. For example:



The cost of car insurance can be reduced by taking time to shop around. In many cases, people can save hundreds of euro on their car insurance. For example, a 22-year-old male student in Cork, with 2 years no claims discount could save over €1,800 on comprehensive cover, while a 35-year old unemployed man living in Co. Carlow could save €586 per year on insuring a 2001 Peugeot 106.

The total cost of credit for a €3,500 one-year loan ranges from €152 to €246 - which is a difference of over €90 between providers.

Consumers around the country can potentially save up to €180 on their annual home insurance costs.

The Financial Regulator's personal finance website, www.itsyourmoney.ie, also includes independent information in plain English on banking, mortgages, loans, savings and investments, insurance, your rights, pensions and budgeting. There is also a quick reference section for information depending on your life stage. You can also use the website calculators to work out the cost of mortgages and loans and sign up for the Financial Regulator's e-newsletters and competitions.

A full list of local libraries is available from www.library.ie

The Late James Feely

It was with deep regret that Sligo County Council learned of the tragic death of our colleague James Feely. James joined Sligo County Council in April 2001 as a driver/Plant Operator.

Senior Executive Engineer Paddy Hughes says the staff are shocked at the loss of a popular, hard working colleague. There is a strong family connection between Sligo County Council and the Feely family, as James' late father Leo served for many years as an Overseer with the Council. The County Manager Hubert Kearns and Cathaoirleach Councillor Seamus Kilgannon expressed sincere condolences on behalf of the Councillors and staff to James' wife Lorraine and the Feely family.

Affordable Housing in **COOLANEY**

Under a Part V Agreement made with Gilleece Bros Construction, Sligo County Council has obtained a number of 4-Bed Semi Detached houses in the Newly constructed 'Ard Laignhe' development in the centre of Coolaney village.

These are to be offered for sale to suitably qualified persons for €150,000. (The remaining 4-Bed houses in the development are being sold privately on the open market for €210,000).

To be considered eligible to purchase one of these houses, applicants must be in a position to raise and sustain repayments on a mortgage of €150,000. Typical repayments (inclusive of Mortgage Interest Relief) on this would be approximately...

€750 per month over 30 years

Or

€700 per month over 35 years

Based on the above, an annual income of approximately €30,000 gross would be required to secure mortgage approval.

If you require any further information or application forms, please feel free to contact **Mr. Jude Mannion**, Housing Section on 911 1302.





The Craft of Masonry Arch Building

Sligo County Council recently hosted a workshop for honing the skills of outdoor staff in the art of masonry arch building.



Photo of Attendees from L to R

Jimmy Conlon, Michael Hopkins, Dermot McBain, Tom Kerr (NRA) Pat McAfee (Master Mason and Tutor), John McMunn, Dessie Sloyan - Engineer, Damien Davey, Vincent Feeney, Tony Parke, Gary Salter - Senior Executive Engineer and Seamus Wynne.

The county has approximately 250 masonry bridges ageing from 130 to perhaps 700 years old. Each year the Council Staff repair, strengthen or occasionally widen a number of masonry arches.

The workshop was given by Mr. Pat McAfee, who apart from being a master mason is an expert in the use of traditional materials used in conservation work for buildings etc. Pat is also the author of a number of excellent texts e.g. Irish Stone Walls and Stone Buildings and has given two previous workshops as part of our ongoing training programme for staff members. He gives workshops in Ireland, Europe and USA. The attendees built a masonry arch as part of the workshop exemplifying the virtues of the technique and materials which we know are unbeatable from a durability point of view.

Our staff are ideally placed to carry out this specialist; restoration work to our historic bridges according to Gary Salter, Senior Executive Officer. Experience has shown “our staff produce excellent results and generally have a good understanding of the requirements in the use of traditional materials and methods.

Last year our staff constructed a new two span masonry arch road bridge using traditional materials and methods and without the use of any Portland cement, it is a first

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Sligo's newest Bridge

Tony Underwood and James Canavan, builders.



for Local Authorities. The results are very promising and the technique is likely to be continued elsewhere in the county as bridge widening of old structures is required to facilitate road improvement schemes.”



Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Martin Baker presents Councillor Margaret Gormley with a photographic record of her term as Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council.



Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Martin Baker presents Councillor Patsy Barry with a photographic record of his term as Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council.

Heritage Office News

Sligo County Council Announces Heritage Grant Schemes for 2008

'Knowing, valuing and caring for Sligo's heritage'.

Sligo County Council in association with the County Sligo Heritage Forum is committed to "working with the community, to know, value and care for Sligo's heritage and to increase awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of our heritage for all".

Through the County Sligo Heritage Office, Sligo County Council administers the following Heritage Grant Schemes.

- Local Authority Grants for the Conservation of Protected Structures
- Community Heritage Grant Scheme
- Heritage in Schools Grant Scheme

Applications are now being sought for the above grant schemes for 2008.



The railings at Calry Parish Church, The Mall, Sligo before and after works completed.

Conservation Grants for Protected Structures

The Local Authority Grants for the Conservation of Protected Structures, are designed to assist the owner or occupier of a structure which is protected because of its 'architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest', to undertake works on such a structure. Works which qualify under the scheme where they consist of the conservation of one or more elements of a qualifying structure are works which are necessary to;

- secure the stability of a structure or part of a structure
- make a structure weather or damp proof
- conserve or repair external walls or internal features
- carry out temporary repairs, to protect a structure from immediate risk.



In 2007 Sligo County Council grant aided 12 projects under the scheme. A total of €115,000 was awarded during 2007 and the works completed were all to a very high conservation standard.

The successful projects included:

1. Union Place (€9,000) - Roof repair and render replacement
2. St. Paul's Parish Church, Collooney (9,500) - Repair roof on clock tower,
3. Pearse Road, Sligo (€13,000) - Roof Repair,
4. Thatched Cottage, Cashelgarron (€7,659) - Emergency temporary repair,
5. Longford Pavillion, Beltra (€1,500) - New cast iron guttering,
6. Holy Trinity Church, Ballysadare (€10,779) - Repair and replace roof & guttering on apse,
7. Cathedral of Immaculate Conception, Sligo (€14,000) - Repair stained glass windows in sanctuary,
8. St. John's Cathedral, John Street (€14,000) - Replace parapet guttering,
9. Calry Parish Church, The Mall, Sligo (€10,406) - Replace wrought iron railings,
10. Annaghmore House, Collooney (€6,526) - Replace cast iron rainwater system,
11. Markree West Gate Lodge, Collooney (€16,979) - repair stonework on telegraphic tower,
12. Glebe House, Grange (€1,650) - repair render and repaint exterior.

Community Heritage Grants

Sligo Local Authorities have a pivotal role to play in nurturing and encouraging pride in our heritage and the Community Heritage Grant Scheme provides a ideal opportunity for the Local Authority to work in a dynamic partnership with local communities to foster awareness and appreciation of our heritage. Sligo County Council encourages projects which relate to the following: monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways. Projects relating to local history and traditions, placenames, folklore, traditional crafts and skills and museums and archives will also be considered under the scheme. An annual funding package of €20,000 is available annually under this scheme with individual grant allocations limited to €1,000 per project.

During 2007 the following communities benefited from support through the grant scheme.

- North Sligo Agricultural Show, Grange - Presentations during Grange Show
- Moygara Castle Research Project 2007 - Year 2 of a 3 year Survey Programme
- Friends of Ballindoon Abbey - Seminar, Programme and Tour
- Moylough Arts & Heritage Centre - Project around



Moylough Belt

- Sligo Field Club - Development of promotional material and website
- Bird Watch Ireland (Sligo Branch) - Development of profile of group and website
- Co. Sligo 'Sidhe Gaoith' Strawboys - CD of traditional stories, ballads, music and singers
- Grange Crochet Workers - Classes and workshops to upgrade skills
- Easkey Heritage & Genealogy Society - 'Past & Present' Booklet no 3 of ongoing project
- Killaspugbrone Preservation Project - Train craftsman in stone conservation for maintenance
- Ballymote Abbey Graveyard - Restore & maintain paths and features at Abbey and graveyard
- Castleconnor Community Development Group - History of Parish 1900-2006

Heritage in Schools Scheme

The Heritage Council, in partnership with the INTO, operates the Heritage in Schools scheme. The scheme offers a panel of Heritage specialists who will, at the request of a teacher, visit a primary school to work directly with the children on heritage related projects. To facilitate the promotion of the scheme in Sligo, the Heritage Office, Sligo County Council will be sponsoring a limited number of 'Heritage in Schools' visits during 2008.

During 2007, more than 10 primary schools in Sligo, with approx. 350 children benefiting as part of the scheme.

The closing date for receipt of completed applications for the above schemes is 5pm on Wednesday the 13th February 2008.

Details and application forms can be downloaded from:

<http://www.sligococo.ie/Services/Heritage/NewsandEvents/>

For further information and application forms for any of these schemes contact:

Barbara Dobson, County Sligo Heritage Office, Sligo County Council. Tel: 071 91 11255 or email; heritage@sligococo.ie

Sligo County Council and Sligo Heritage Forum in partnership with The Heritage Council have issued invitations to tender for the following projects:

- County Sligo Hedgerow Survey
- County Sligo Wetlands Survey
- Archaeology and Development: Guidelines and training for Sligo Local Authorities.

The deadline for receipt of Tender documents is 4.00pm on 8th February, 2008.

EDUCATION... THE KEY TO INCLUSION

A recent seminar hosted by the Sligo Branch of People With Disabilities Ireland (PWDI) "Education & Training: Key to Inclusion and Employment", focused on developing education and training programmes for people with disabilities. The seminar was opened by Mayor Councillor Jonathan McGoldrick.

The seminar coincided with 'International Disability Day' in the European Year of Equal Opportunities, was attended by representatives from local schools, FAS, Rehab Care, Sligo I.T., Sligo V.E.C, HSE Northwest, The National Learning Network, Post Polio Group and Community Education Facilitator.

In his address the Mayor placed the importance of the seminar in context 'The PWDI is the only national organisation which represents all disability groups. The association was formed following the publication of the Government's 'Strategy on Equality', and you have been to the fore in ensuring the key recommendations were adopted and delivered.'



The Mayor concluded his address by informing the delegates that 'The key message being conveyed at the forum is that people with disabilities have the education, training, as well as the vision and ambition, to make their contribution to their city, their society.'

Chairman of the Sligo network of PWDI, Brian Crummy, advised the conference delegates that 'There are 402 recommendations in the Strategy for Equality and we in PwDI continue our best endeavours to make sure that they are implemented. On that Commission there would have been Working Groups on Education, Training and Employment. There are 30 committees such as ours in the country and we are all volunteers. There is a National Office in Dublin with a paid staff, led by a CEO., and there is a National Board. We are actively recruiting members,



we act in unison with other voluntary organisations. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform provide funding.'

The seminar was addressed by Margaret Gilmore, Senior Lecturer in Social Studies, Institute of Technology, Sligo, who outlined the choices facing school leavers, and they key factors in making the right career choice. Her lecture emphasised the critical importance of addressing the areas of inclusion, diversity and integration in the context of developing independence for people with disabilities.'

Chair Brian Crummy thanked the conference speakers, remarking that their presentations covered a wide spectrum of educational and training issues, and the topics addressed were of particular interest to the delegates.

TREE AND HEDGE CUTTING

The Roads Act obliges landowners and occupiers of land to take all reasonable care to ensure that the trees, hedges and other vegetation growing on their land are not, or could not become, a danger to people using or working on a public road.

Examples of hazards might include dead or dying trees or hedges interfering with traffic, blocking footpaths, obscuring road signs or obscuring a view of the road ahead.

Sligo County Council wishes to thank landowners who have carried out this work, and requests other landowners to ensure these works are carried out by the end of February 2008 (as required under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000).

World Wetlands Day

The second of February each year is World Wetlands Day. It marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

During 2008, Sligo County Council will be commissioning a survey of wetlands in the county to look at their ecological and other values. The project is an action of the County Sligo Heritage Plan 2007-2011 and will be jointly funded by Sligo County Council and the Heritage Council.

All over Europe and beyond, many policies have combined to wring whole landscapes dry. Infilling, drainage and the closing off of river floodplains have been harmful to the interests of people and nature. A wrung-dry landscape has little capacity to provide clean reliable supplies of water.



The theme for World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2008, is **Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People**. There are many direct, positive effects on human health from maintaining healthy wetlands - such as the provision of food, clean water, pharmaceutical products, etc. The direct negative effects of mismanaging wetlands can result in the impairment of our health and even the loss of life - such as through the effects of water-related diseases, floods, and water pollution.

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Clean water

We've been saying it for years - inland wetlands (rivers, lakes, ponds, marshes, etc.) perform a vital function in filtering and purifying freshwater, rendering it 'clean' for human consumption. And never has it been a more valuable service for human populations than today when over one billion people lack access to clean water supplies. But wetlands can only provide us with clean water if we keep them healthy through effective management. What happens when we destroy our wetlands is obvious - we lose this source of clean water, as well as all the other ecosystem services they provide.

Water pollution

Despite the capacity of freshwater wetlands in purifying water, they do have their limits. They can only deal with so much agricultural runoff, and so much inflow from domestic and industrial wastes. Wetlands act as filters or traps for many pathogens - when the passage of water through wetlands is long enough, pathogens lose their viability or are consumed by other organisms. We can, and do, readily move beyond the purifying powers of wetlands so that these sources of freshwater, and the food they supply, are threatened.

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The strong relationship between healthy functioning wetland ecosystems and human health underlines the importance of management strategies that support both the health of wetland ecosystems and the health of humans. The costs of poor management can be high.

At a European level and in Ireland, the management and protection of water has been mapped out through the European Water (Framework) Directive 2000. It is encouraging that the Directive has as its first words: "Whereas: (1) Water is not a commercial product like any other but, rather, a heritage which must be protected, defended and treated as such".



Floods

Floods and storms have affected human lives since the beginning of civilization. While we cannot easily prevent major floods, we can ensure that we benefit from the flood protection services that wetlands supply free of charge. Rivers, lakes and marshes slow down and retain floodwaters but only if we do not build our urban centres on natural floodplains and are more thoughtful about the broader implications of canalizing our rivers and draining our marshes.

Mental well-being

We use urban green spaces, including rivers, lakes and reservoirs, for recreation, for education, and for relaxation. The value of green spaces in improving the mental and physical health of populations is gaining greater recognition and current studies indicate measurable physical and psychological benefits from regular contact with green spaces. Recent research is showing that there is also a synergistic effect of physical activity in natural environments - what is being called 'green-exercise' - on an individual's sense of well-being. Wetlands, particularly in an urban context, have a key role to play here.

For more information on The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands see www.ramsar.org.

For further information on the Sligo Wetlands Survey 2008, contact Siobhán Ryan, Heritage Officer, County Sligo Heritage Office, Sligo County Council, Riverside, Sligo on Tel: 071-9111255 or email: heritage@sligococo.ie.

Inaugural Meeting of Partnership Committee

Sligo Local Authorities held the first meeting of the newly established Partnership Committee on the 27th November, 2007.

The Committee consists of 10 members made up of three Management Representatives and seven Union Representatives. The Management Representatives are Dorothy Clarke Director of Services, Mary Blowick Administrative Officer and Paddy Hughes Senior Executive Engineer. The Union Representatives are Jim O'Sullivan and James Loughlin (SIPTU), Gordon Lyttle (A.E.U.), Catherine O'Donovan and Frankie Brannigan (IMPACT) Bartley Gavin (LAPO) and Michael Hopkins (UCATT). The Joint Chairs elected by the group are Jim O'Sullivan and Dorothy Clarke. Emer Connolly acts as Partnership Facilitator for the group, which meets monthly. The role of the Facilitator is to support the Partnership Committee and sub-committees and to promote the whole partnership concept among staff at all levels through information sharing and meeting with staff. It is hoped that during early 2008 a number of meetings will be arranged locally to involve and advise staff on the partnership process.



The core concept of 'Partnership is joint ownership of change by Management, Unions and staff and to replace the adversarial approach with an open and co-operative process based on effective consultation and participation by all concerned'.

It is hoped that the Partnership Process will have a positive effect on Sligo Local Authorities. It is anticipated that the Partnership Committee will be involved in various projects during the coming year. If you have any issue that you feel should be discussed at the Partnership meetings, you can contact your Union representative or any member of the Partnership Committee.



Outdoor Training



Standing l-r Derek Carter Polaris H.R. Course provider, Roman Shykula, Vincent Anderson, Mattie Loughlin, Michael Coen

Sitting l-r Adrian Flannery, Pat Glancy (Leitrim Co.Co.) Tommy McPartland (Leitrim Co. Council) & Brian Scanton

The course entitled 'Outdoor Services Supervision(Supervisory Skills Development)' and was held over a nine day period from October 2007 to January 2008 and was attended by six participants from Sligo Local Authorities. Two participants attended from Leitrim County Council. This training programme has proved very successful with participants over the past number of years and this group were no exception. The aim of the course is to provide the outdoor personnel with the fundamental understanding of the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to function effectively in their first role as First Line Managers/Supervisors.



Bishop Christopher Jones signs the Distinguished Visitors' Book at County Hall. Front row (l-r): Cathaoirleach Cllr Seamus Kilgannon, Bishop Jones, County Manager Hubert Kearns. Back row (l-r) Monsignor Gerard Dolan, Fr Michael Duignan



Mayor of Sligo Councillor Jonathon McGoldrick pictured with Tommy Fleming and his wife Tina at a recent reception in City Hall



RECENT CIRCULARS

The following Department circulars were received between 1st December 2008 and 24rd January, 2008.

Date	Circular Number	Subject
03/12/07	Fin 19/07	Statutory Formats for Budget 2008
03/12/07	S.278/5/2(4)	Public Service Pension Reform - pensionability of part-time local authority employees
10/12/08	WSP 13/07	Water Services Non-Domestic Metering Programme
11/12/07	S. 541/4/4	Standardisation of Pension Terms
13/12/07	LG(P) 14/2007	Towards 2016 - Filling of 20% of posts at Grade V to Grade 7 by open competition
20/12/07	LG26/07	Revised set of service indicators and accompanying methodologies for use by local authorities from 2008
21/12/07	LG(P) 17/07	Request for proposals for National Disability Strategy funding for 2008
21/12/07	WSP 14/07	Water Services Act 2007 - 1st Guidance Circular
20/12/07	LG 27/07	Funding for the Community & Voluntary For a 2008
31/12/07	LG(P) 15/07	Public Sector Employment - Local Authority Sector December 2007 Quarter Return
07/01/08	EL 01/08	Local Authority Pay and Related Costs
09/01/08	WSP1/08	Water Services Pricing Policy Implementation Water Charges/Water Conservation for Schools
10/01/08	LSS 01/08	Control of Dogs Act, 1986 & 1992 - Local Authorities Returns for 2007.

If you would like a copy of a particular circular, contact the Communications Office @ 071 9111018.



SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL ✦ SLIGO BOROUGH COUNCIL



Diary of Events :: February 2008

Corporate

- 1st Feb** The Register of Electors 2008/2009 is published.
- 4th Feb** Monthly meeting of Sligo County Council, County Hall, Riverside, Sligo @ 11.00 am.
- 4th Feb** Monthly meeting of Sligo Borough Council, City Hall, Sligo @ 8.00 pm.
- 15th Feb** Register of Elector 2008/2009 comes into effect.
- 18th Feb** General Purposes Meeting of Sligo Borough Council, City Hall, Sligo @ 8.00 pm.
- 18th Feb** Cathaoirleach to host reception for Tom Higgins (author), County Hall, Riverside, Sligo.
- 25th Feb** Special Meeting to Confer the Freedom of the Borough on Michael Flatley, Sligo Borough Council, City Hall, Sligo @ 8.00 pm.
- 28th Feb** March edition of eContact published.
- 28th Feb** Sligo Local Authorities podcast available on www.sligococo.ie and www.sligoborough.ie.

Tubbercurry Library

- Bookworms Bookclub (Date to be confirmed)
- Active Retired Bookclub (Date to be confirmed)
- Library bookclubs attending Ennis Book Festival. (Date to be confirmed)

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Diary of Events :: February 2008

Water Services

26th Feb Closing date for receipt of submissions or observations in relation to the proposed construction of a storm water holding tank, associated pipelines, manholes and associated works at Sea Field, Cliff Road, Carrowhubbuck South Td., Enniscrone, Co. Sligo.

Planning

6th Feb Closing date for receipt of submissions in relation to the proposed development of the Eastern Garvoge Bridge and approach roads at Bellanode, Rathquarter, Farranacardy, Ballytivnan, Abbeyquarter North and Cleveragh Demense, Sligo.

8th Feb Closing date for submissions in relation to the Review of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan and the making of a new plan.

15th Feb Closing date for submissions or observations in relation to the proposed enhancement and road paving works at O'Connell St., Sligo, the junction of Grattan St., O'Connell St., John St., and Harmony Hill, the junction of O'Connell St and Wine St., Lower Knox St. and Fish Quay St., Sligo.

15th Feb Closing date for submissions or observations in relation to the proposed North Fringe Local Area Plan.

15th Jan Public Information Meeting in relation to the Review of Sligo & Environs Development Plan (SEDP) in the Sligo Park Hotel @ 8.00 pm.

17th Jan Public Information Meeting in relation to the Review of Sligo & Environs Development Plan (SEDP) in the Clarion Hotel @ 8.00 pm.

24th Jan Public Consultation Meeting as part of the pre-draft public consultation stage for the Proposed North Fringe Local Area Plan (Teesan-Lisnalurg) in the Clarion Hotel @ 7.30 pm.

(Continued on page 31)



Diary of Events :: February 2008

Roads

Feb 08

Temporary closing of Local Road L-7416-0 to Local Road L7416-23 Road (Drumkilsellagh to Glackbaun, Calry) to all vehicular traffic, in order to facilitate pipe laying works.

4th - 15th Feb

Temporary closing of Cemetery Road to all vehicular traffic, in order to facilitate essential road restoration works.

18th Feb - 7th Mar

Temporary closing of Regional Road R292 at Knappaghmore/Ballydoogan, Sligo to all vehicular traffic, in order to facilitate essential road restoration works

Heritage

8th Feb

Closing date for receipt of Tender documents for 3 Projects:

- County Sligo Hedgerow Survey
- County Sligo Wetlands Survey
- Archaeology and Development: Training and Guidelines for Sligo Local Authorities.

13th Feb

Closing date for receipt of applications for Heritage Grants

Conservation Grants for Protected Structures 2008

Community Heritage Grants 2008

Heritage In Schools 2008.

Sligo County Community Forum

15th Feb

Meeting on Social Integration in Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo @ 8.00 pm.

For regular updates on roadworks and other news, visit the Sligo Local Authorities' websites at www.sligococo.ie and www.sligoborough.ie.

The next edition of eContact will be published on 28th February 2008.