

# Wavelength

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR THE COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Issue No.3, Mar-Apr 2002

Welcome once again to 'Wavelength' the networking and information supplement for the Community and Voluntary Sector. We hope that by now 'Wavelength' has established itself as a vulnerable and worthwhile medium of disseminating information to all concerned and the Community Forum, as always, welcomes your comments on any of the issues raised in this page. At our AGM in February, Martin Riches stepped down as Chairperson. In the two years he spent at the post he has worked tirelessly to develop the forum. His skill, enthusiasm and dedication will be sorely missed. A tough act to follow? We think so but we have a first class replacement. Congratulations to Nellie Brett who was unanimously elected to succeed as Chairperson and good luck with the work that lies ahead. Also at our AGM, Anne Marie Irish stepped down as secretary. Often a thankless task with a heavy workload, Anne Marie carried the secretary's role with the utmost efficiency and determination. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to both Martin and Ann Marie for all that they have done for the development of the Community Forum. Meanwhile, we need a new secretary, salary non negotiable, non existent, excellent opportunities, anyone interested.

## Key issues are addressed at the consultation meetings with women

THREE meetings were held to hear the views of women on what were the key issues that needed to be addressed in the strategy for social economic and cultural development.

The areas covered were:

- Women in work, business and farming
- Supports for family and community
- Women in adult education and training

The report also draws out some of the points raised in relation to women's participation in decision making structures.

### Women in work and business

It was recognised that while great opportunities have opened up for women in the workplace, a lot of issues still remain to be resolved. Examples:

- Women and men together have to become involved in a process of sharing responsibilities equally for home, children and work. At the moment, it is still women who carry the burden of these responsibilities. This limits their contribution to the workplace and consequently their input into decision-making structures.
- While for many there are more opportunities to job share, this area needs to be further developed. While there is a focus on family friendly work practices, there is a lack of understanding of what this means and in turn women are not being made aware of new practices in this area.
- Where women avail of job sharing, it is prohibiting their chances of promotion and moving into decision-making positions in organisations.
- Older women still experience discrimination in returning to the workforce.
- Lack of opportunities for training for women, particularly in the tourist sector where many of the part time jobs are available. Women are therefore remaining at a particular skill level and not in a position to move outside of this.
- There should be better opportunities in distance learning and outreach courses, in particular making use of video conferencing.
- The need for more accredited training, using a building block approach so that women can increase their level of qualifications in a systematic but flexible way.
- Lack of transport in rural areas is a key issue.
- Lack of affordable quality childcare. This is a particular issue in rural areas, which is contributing to lifelessness in rural communities. Children are being brought into Kilkenny City for childcare and both parents and children are building their social networks outside of where they live.
- The lack of opportunities for rural tourism limits opportunities for women to become involved in this area in their own communities, either in employment or self employed. The focus on Kilkenny City means that few opportunities fall to

the rural hinterland. Addressing this issue would automatically provide more opportunities for women to work in their own communities and bring more life back into rural areas.

### Women in Farming

- Not a profitable lifestyle and women in most cases provide the additional income.
- Catering at busy times falls to women, this is not recognised as part of the work.
- Inheritance of farm is in favour of boys.
- Lack of input into decision making in farming by women.
- Farming has become more bureaucratic; the burden of this has fallen to women.

### Supports for family and community

- Lack of affordable supports for elder care and childcare and after school care, particularly in rural areas.
- Lack of support for carers, there is inadequate support from Government for carers. Better supports for carers would mean more elderly people could be looked after at home, which is far more cost effective in the longer term.
- Economic pressure on women to work in the workplace prevents women from having a choice in relation to caring for children.
- Lack of supports for young couples in urban areas, lack of a sense of community and identity.
- Security is an issue — particularly for women at night. There is a perception of poor Garda presence and back up.
- Women are not in a position to provide social supports at community level, which in the past was unpaid work. This gap is not being filled and this is a key issue that needs to be addressed.
- Transport and in particular rural transport is a key issue
- Women who work unpaid in the home need recognition, and in particular need to have their pension needs looked after.
- The need for more opportunities for women who are experiencing exclusion, in particular single parent families in rural areas. There is a need to start with simple things like parent and toddler groups, personal development programmes which are attractive and will engage women and will allow them to progress.
- A county focus around the issue of violence against women needs to be put in place.
- Healthcare for women is an issue. The availability of screening tests is inadequate and the efficiency in receiving results needs to be addressed. Costs associated with these tests is very high e.g. mammogram and osteoporosis. This brings about an inequity, where those who

can afford the test have them, and those on low income cannot avail of these tests.

### Women and Adult Education and Training

- The back to education initiative is a very positive one, but the fact that women whose husbands are working are not eligible is still a major issue.
- There is a lot of training and education available, however, poor transport provision hinders participation. The spread of provision across the county is also an issue.
- Lack of clear information on what is available and lack of clear information on accreditation levels.
- Lack of guidance services to assist people to make coherent choices in relation to deciding on what courses to do.

### Women and Decision Making

- There is a need to encourage more women to become involved in local decision-making organisations where the experience is that men still dominate.
- Women need to be supported and to develop the necessary skills to do so. This was particularly stressed in relation to farming, where men dominate the decision making structures
- The 40% target should be enforced.

### Key changes that would make a difference to women

- A collective voice for women where issues are raised with consistency.
- An accountability mechanism. Currently a lot of issues are raised, and no agency is taking responsibility for dealing with the issues. Gender Proofing with real measurable targets should be put in place.
- Strategies to address the 40% target for women on boards should be put in place.
- Better information systems — there is no particular place to address these issues. This is an even greater issue in rural areas. The need for information points in rural areas was stressed.
- A better choice and better access to adult education and training information in particular.
- Training for the tourist sector, in information technology and in engineering.
- Better availability of literacy programmes in rural areas.
- Better supports in relation to elder care, childcare and after school care.
- A rural transport service that is flexible and accessible.
- More active retirement groups in rural areas to help address the issue of rural isolation.



At the Rural Transport Audit in Kilkenny Castle, Fergal Blamshfield, Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs; Jimmy Conway, representing Taxi Drivers Association; Teresa Nolan, Kilkenny Social Services; Liz Dermody, representing Community, Voluntary and Childcare.

## Housing Strategy under the Planning Act, 2000

### Strategic Policy Committee 1

MR M. Delahunty circulated a summarised report on Part 5 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and the Kilkenny Housing Strategy:

#### Part 5 Agreements

When submitting an application for permission for housing on zoned land an applicant must also submit a proposal to transfer 18.7% of the site to the Planning Authority for the purposes of social and affordable housing. Compensation is payable and is based on existing use. A property arbitrator may be nominated in the event of a disagreement with the agreement of the Planning Authority, build and transfer houses or may develop and transfer serviced sites to the local authority.

It is open to the applicant to propose a number of options for meeting the Part 5 requirement. Kilkenny County Council would prefer if agreements could cover houses rather than land.

It is desirable that options will have been decided at the pre-planning discussions and before the planning application is lodged. The agreement must be finalised before the development commences.

#### Exemptions

The following are exempt:

- Developments consisting of the provision of 4 or fewer houses, or
- Housing on land of 0.2 hectares or less will be exempt where an exemption certificate has been granted in respect of the development.
- Applications for Certificates of Exemption should be made before an application for permission is submitted to the Planning

Authority.

- An application form and statutory declaration are available in the Planning Offices.

#### Withering of Permissions

Applications made between 25 August, 1999 and 15 October, 2001, for housing on zoned land, shall cease to have effect on 31 December, 2002, or on the expiry of a period of two years from the date of the grant of permission, whichever is the later. This applies to developments, which have not commenced, or to developments where the external walls are not complete. It will be necessary, therefore, in these cases for a new permission to be obtained and the 18.7% requirement will apply to the new permission.

A schedule of the relevant permissions will be drawn up in 2002.

#### Working Arrangements

Pre-planning discussions will take place between developers and the Housing Department (John McCormack, DOS/Rose Kenny, SEO) and the relevant Area Planner. Proposals should then be submitted with the planning application.

#### Guidelines

The Department Of Environment and Local Government published Guidelines For Planning Authorities in December 2000 and an Implementation Manual should be available shortly. It was agreed to circulate a copy of the application for an Exemption Certificate and Statutory Declaration to members and replies on some enquiries to individual members.



Pictured at the Rural Transport Audit in Kilkenny Castle, from left: Pat Nolan, Iarnroad Eireann; Brid Hynes, County Development Board; Martin Riches, Rural Transport Working Group, Chairperson; Thomas Breathnach, South Kilkenny Federation.

## Report from Strategic Policy Committee 3

MR P. O'Neill informed the Committee of the forthcoming conference on waste to be held in Kilkenny between the March 13 and 15. He issued an invitation to all SPC members to attend the conference at any time over that three-day period.

Sadhbh O'Neill, Environmental Officer, outlined Kilkenny County Council's recent recycling and environmental awareness initiatives. The Committee commented on the excellent work that had been done by Kilkenny County Council in this field over the last year.

Sadhbh outlined to the Committee proposals for a Regional Environmental Debating Competition for Transition Year Students.

#### Dunmore landfill extension update

Mr. O'Neill said that the Environmental Protection

Agency had granted a licence to the extension on 23 December, and an objection had been received on the final date for receipt of objections. The Council had also made an objection.

He said that the EPA usually made a decision on such objections within two to four months. He stressed to the Group that there had been a very co-operative response from the Chamber of Commerce, IBEC and the waste collection operators to the Council's imposition of a ban on recyclable materials.

He stated that he hoped this partnership approach would help Kilkenny County Council overcome these difficult few months.

#### Water and sewerage investment update

Mr T. Gunning gave a progress report on the major schemes, Graignamanagh, he

hoped, would be completed by May 1 and the Thomastown Scheme would be completed by the end of June.

The Kilmacow Scheme had gone through the planning process and negotiations were ongoing with the landowner.

This scheme will be probably the first public private partnership water and sewerage scheme in Kilkenny County Council with a design, build, and operate facility covering treatment works only.

The Council had briefly engaged consultants to draw up a joint water plan between Kilkenny Corporation and Kilkenny County Council.

It was hoped to secure funding for the upgrading of the Gowran-Goresbridge, Bennettsbridge and Paulstown schemes. In the meantime the Council were continuing with the Small Schemes Programme. No indication was received from the Department of the Environment in relation to the Council's proposals for ten small towns and villages.

It was suggested by different members of the Committee that Kilkenny County Council look into the possibility of using the reed bed system to upgrade existing schemes.

#### County Development Board update

IN THE previous editions of Wavelengths, we outlined to you work that has been taking place by the County Development Board over the past twelve to eighteen months in terms of the preparation of a 10 year strategy for the county on "Economic, Social and Cultural Development".

As part of this, we have included some of the key findings gathered through an extensive consultation process carried out throughout the county.

Here in this edition we again include some further consultation session summaries for your information. Issues raised at such consultations have informed the direction of the strategy. Over the past two months the County Development Board has been finalising its work in relation to the strategy. At this stage all consultation sessions have been finalised and a draft document has been prepared.

The staff of the Community and Enterprise Section have presented the key elements of this draft strategy to the Community and Voluntary Sector and to the key agencies working in the county, at public meetings held in mid-February.

The Draft strategy is also available on our website [www.kilkennycdb.ie](http://www.kilkennycdb.ie).

Any feedback and comments would be most welcome. The closing date for submissions is Friday March 8. It is hoped to bring the final draft of the strategy before the next County Council meeting on Monday, March 25, for ratification.

#### Kilkenny County Childcare

THE KILKENNY County Childcare Committee was established as part of the National Childcare Strategy.

Each county across the Republic is responsible for setting up childcare committees that will take responsibility for developing a co-ordinated approach for the delivery of quality childcare at a local level.

Kilkenny County Childcare Committee has recently become a limited company by guarantee and has recruited Lindsey Butler as the new County Childcare Co-ordinator.

The committee have contracted Paul Cassidy from NGM Consultants to undertake research, and work in consultation with the committee in developing the strategy. They will be working on the draft strategy from March 7.

Once the strategy is finalised and approved by the Department of Equality, Justice and Law Reform the committee hope to launch the plan and invite the public to become active participants in this exciting new development.

### County Development Board

#### Staff Team:

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If you wish to respond to this page e-mail your comments to: [nbrett@oceanfree.net](mailto:nbrett@oceanfree.net) or write to Nellie Brett, Main Street, Gowran

## Background to the Local Sports Partnership Initiative

SPORT is often under-resourced at local level, yet it is in the home areas that the vast majority of children are introduced to sport and where most people take part in sport. There are many thousands of dedicated volunteers in local clubs and communities supporting and administering sport. Without them sport could not exist.

There are also many local publicly-funded organisations promoting sport in some way, although doing so is not their prime objective, for example, local authorities provide and operate swimming pools, leisure centres, playing fields and other facilities; VECs support local sports clubs and activity programmes, schools introduce their pupils to sport and provide opportunities for

co-curricular sport. It is at the county and city level that there is the greatest potential to bring local organisations together to promote and develop local sport.

Accordingly, the Irish Sports Council is promoting the creation of local sports partnerships to undertake this task.

Local sports partnership is the delivery mechanism through which the work currently ongoing at local level in relation to sport can be enhanced and the work that needs to be done can be effectively tackled.

A local sports partnership will comprise of all those statutory agencies, organisations and groups operating at local level with a responsibility for or an interest in sports

development. The involvement of the VEC, local authority, health board, FAS, commercial interests, sports clubs/organisations, schools and the community and voluntary sector in the partnership will be important.

The key aims of the local sports partnership will be to increase participation in sport and to ensure that local resources are used to best effect. Through the development of this local sports partnership it is hoped that the following will be achieved:

- Enhanced planning of sport at local level.
- Increased levels of participation.
- Enhanced local coach deployment.
- Club development.
- Volunteer training.
- Local directories of sports bodies and facilities.
- Better utilisation of existing facilities.
- Clear priorities for local facility provision and improvement.
- School / club / community links.
- Local sports events.

Approval for a local sports partnership in turn will mean initially core funding being allocated to employ a sports officer. This officer's role will be to co-ordinate the work of the partnership. Subsequently, funding may be available

for specific, high priority targeted initiatives identified and promoted by the local sports partnership.

Currently, the Irish Sports Council is accepting submissions for funding from across the country. Last year, eight counties succeeded in securing funds. This year a second tranche of funds will be allocated. It is expected that a further twelve local sports partnerships will be approved.

Here in Kilkenny, a working group has come together comprising statutory agencies and the community and voluntary sector to prepare a submission for County Kilkenny. A number of the statutory agencies have jointly funded the engagement of a consultant, Ms. Deirdre Hennessy, to assist in the preparation of this submission.

Over the past month Deirdre has been consulting with many groups throughout the county and carrying out research in her preparation. This application is now nearing completion. Recent indications from the Irish Sports Council reveal that no decision will be made on allocations until after the forthcoming General Election.

We will keep you updated on any progress in future editions.