

Cllr. Marcia D'Alton writes ...

Passage West/Monkstown Project 2006

The Project 2006 initiative for Passage West and Monkstown is proceeding apace. This co-ordinated effort between the Passage West Environment and Development Association, the Passage West Town Council and Cork County Council has brought a new enthusiasm for a brighter, cleaner Passage West/Monkstown. Suggestions for ways by which we may freshen up our towns are most welcome. Particularly appreciated is any pair of hands willing to help in the litterpicks organised for Saturday mornings at 9.30 am and Wednesday evenings at 7.30 pm. Just come along with your gloves to the Fire Station car park in Passage West where, in any reasonable weather, there is distribution of bags and litterpickers.

Residents of Pembroke Wood were out in force on Saturday afternoon last for a litterpick organised by the Pembroke Wood Residents Association. Much was achieved in a short time, the estate benefited greatly and all the children enjoyed lollipops as a reward for their hard work. This type of co-ordinated effort within a park or estate does not merely help to create a more pleasant place to live – it also helps neighbours to get to know each other, it fosters awareness in children and it generates community spirit which, certainly in my experience, creates a sense of wellbeing and belonging. The County Council is willing to assist local clean-ups by providing plastic bags and by taking bags of rubbish away. Should any residents association wish to undertake a clean-up, please contact either myself or the Cork County Council Area Office in Carrigaline.

Planning in Passage West/Monkstown

On 24th of this month, I made a presentation on behalf of the Passage West Town Council to the Planning Office and the Conservation Office of Cork County Council. The focus of the presentation was on planning issues in Passage West, Glenbrook and Monkstown. I believe that it is through proper, well-considered planning now that we will maximise our towns' potential in years to come. To this end, the theme of the presentation was "Building on the Past, Grasping the opportunities of the Present, Reaching for the Future". It led Cork County Council on a photographic tour of the three towns through the eyes of the community, itemising their unique features and highlighting issues in the towns which new development should aim to alleviate rather than accentuate. These are old, linear towns in which new development can assist in the provision of additional parking, commercial opportunities, access to the waterfront, increasing light penetration to the town centre, improving access to heritage features and the provision of open space. The presentation reinforced the positive aims of the Cork County Development Plan for these towns, including greater provision of services and recreational amenities and relief of traffic congestion.

The Town Council was very well received and a positive discussion ensued after the presentation. Cork County Council confirmed that the Architectural Design Guidelines for Passage West/Monkstown which Passage West Town Council presented to them last year will be referenced when planning decisions are being made within the towns. *Monkstown, thereby stimulating investment and engendering a sense of community pride*". Passage West Town Council is the first Town Council in Ireland to have undertaken such an initiative on its own behalf.

Traffic calming in Passage West and Monkstown

Having three young children, I am very conscious of the tremendous worry caused by speeding traffic. I have therefore proposed a motion for the June meeting of the Passage West Town Council asking Cork County Council to apply a special speed limit of 30 km/h on the R610 outside the Star of the Sea primary school in Passage West. Fronting onto the busy road, this school is particularly vulnerable to traffic accelerating down the hill into the town. The Road Traffic Act 2004 granted county councils the power to introduce bye-laws to set special speed limits on designated stretches of road. The 30 km/h speed limit identified by this Act was specifically designed for situations such as this.

It is now two years since I first spoke to Cork County Council in relation to traffic calming on the R610 through Monkstown. Unanimous support from the Passage West Town Council has helped to secure Cork County Council's commitment to the project. Although promised for spring of this year, its implementation has now been delayed again until the fibre optic broadband network proposed for Passage West/Monkstown is installed. This is anticipated to be some time between August and December 2006. It is to be hoped that the full remit of measures which I asked for in July 2004 will be introduced. This includes:

- a gate (similar to that in Shanbally) on the R610 at Carlisle Place to slow traffic coming into the village
- a ramped pedestrian crossing from the Sandquay through the island to the other side, controlled by traffic lights and to be accessed from a footpath build-out so that cars can continue to park safely along the Sandquay
- ramping of the existing pedestrian crossing outside The Bosun.

Signage to warn motorists of the new traffic calming measures would inevitably also be part of the programme.