

Cllr. Marcia D'Alton writes ...

Public meeting re. Port of Cork's proposed container terminal at Ringaskiddy

A public meeting held in relation to the Port of Cork's proposed move from Tivoli to the Oyster Bank at Ringaskiddy was held in the Sacred Heart Church, Monkstown on Monday 27th November. Over 300 residents from Monkstown, Glenbrook, Passage West, Ringaskiddy, Rushbrooke, White Point, Black Point and Cobh were in attendance.

Cllr. Dominick Donnelly, Mayor of Passage West Town Council, chaired the meeting, while I outlined in a slide presentation the Port of Cork's proposed plans for the Oyster Bank and the potential impacts thereof on surrounding residential areas and Cork Harbour generally.

The principal impacts of concern mentioned were visual, noise, loss of amenity and traffic. Particular concern was expressed with regard to the vast size of the 18-hectare reclamation proposed. The visual impact will arise from the four 75 – 80 metre high cranes proposed for the loading and unloading of ships, the container-stacking gantry of 25 – 30 metres high and the containers themselves which are proposed to be stacked 5-high. Potential noise issues as predicted by the Port of Cork were detailed. Should the development proceed, statutory night-time noise limits would be exceeded at Black Point and, depending on the final layout of the terminal, at several other locations in Rushbrooke and Ringaskiddy. Traffic is of major concern as the NRA's proposed upgrade of the N28 has now been delayed by several years. This means that even in the first year of the terminal's operation, more than an additional 500 vehicles would be using the existing Shannonpark roundabout every day. Should the terminal reach full-scale operation, vehicles accessing the Port of Cork's facility at Ringaskiddy would increase by more than 5,000 each day.

While this proposal is for a new container terminal and ro-ro facility only, it is merely a part of the Port of Cork's Masterplan for Ringaskiddy. Also in the pipeline include redevelopment of the ADM jetty to facilitate bulk cargo, redevelopment of the trade car lands at Ringaskiddy and a further extension to the now-proposed container terminal. The full impact of this proposed Masterplan has never been evaluated and is likely to change the face of Harbour living forever as we know it.

Simon Coveney, T.D., Ciaran Lynch T.D. and Michael McGrath, T.D. also attended the meeting and spoke generally to the residents about the Port of Cork's proposed development, as did Cllrs. John Collins, Tim Lombard and Seamus McGrath.

The Port of Cork submitted a planning application in respect of its proposed development at the Oyster Bank on 21st November. The application is being considered by An Bord Pleanála under the Strategic Infrastructure Act, 2006. All documentation associated with the planning application is available to view either at County Hall or at www.oysterbankplanning.ie.

Passage West/Monkstown Railway Trail

The Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway (CB&PR) between Cork City and Passage West from 1850 to 1902. Concurrently, the railway company operated a paddle steamer service connecting Passage West to other towns in the Lower Harbour. In 1902, the railway was extended to Monkstown. The CB&PR was an integral part of life for people working and living in both Passage West and Monkstown until its closure in 1932. During this year, the 75th anniversary of the closing of the CB&PR, Passage West Town Council has been very supportive of my enthusiasm to mark the importance of the railway to the development of Passage West and Monkstown.

Courtesy of funding secured from the Heritage Council, supplemented by funding from Cork County Council and from local business, Primeline Logistics, Passage West Town Council was able to commission the production of a Railway Trail to run along the route of the old railway line. The Railway Trail will start along the Hop Island – Passage West embankment and will finish on the Monkstown side of the Cut and Cover. Both the beginning and end will be marked by a noticeboard providing an illustrated history of the CB&PR. In between will be 10 stops at remaining items of railway infrastructure. Each stop will be marked by a small pole-mounted lectern, again providing a brief illustrated account of the role that piece of infrastructure played in the running of the railway. The 10 stops will be as follows:

1. Hop Island – Horsehead embankment
2. Roberts' Bridge
3. Railway Quay
4. Narrow gauge track (at Toureen)
5. Water Tower and stile
6. Site of Passage West railway station (at Fr. O'Flynn Park)
7. Passage West – Glenbrook tunnel (at Beach Road)
8. Site of Glenbrook railway station (at the former Kearney's bus yard)
9. Site of Glenbrook pier
10. Cut and Cover

After several months of working with the designers, the Railway Trail infrastructure has finally been received and we are delighted to announce that it will be erected by Cork County Council early next week. This is a very exciting first step in marking the rich industrial heritage of Passage West/Monkstown which should bring much enjoyment to walkers, local residents and railway enthusiasts.

Micheal Martin to launch novel aboard Irish Navy ship in Cork

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheal Martin, will officially launch the first novel by Cork-born author and pilot, Barry Foley, aboard the Irish Naval Ship, LE Eithne, at the City Quays in Cork City on December 3rd at 8pm.

“Out of Range” tells the story of a deadly terrorist attack off the west coast of Ireland in which the Irish Navy must formulate a virtually impossible rescue plan after an American cruise liner carrying 800 passengers is attacked by terrorists seeking another great “spectacular” against the United States.

This is a tense thriller that takes the reader on a cutting edge odyssey, set against the backdrop of a modern small navy. Air/sea rescue helicopters, hostage taking, terrorists, the most inhospitable ocean in the world, superbly researched – this book has it all. Marine Correspondent with the Irish Times, Lorna Siggins, described the book as “Salt-soaked suspense and intrigue ... a real page turner and superbly well paced”.

A native of Currabinny in Cork Harbour, Barry has served with the Irish Navy. He is also a qualified pilot and sub-aqua diver. As part of his research for the book, Barry engaged in extensive consultation with both the Irish Navy in Haulbowline and the Air Corps, he undertook simulated exercises in the sea survival pool at the National Maritime College at Ringaskiddy and also took part in simulated search and rescue operations involving both air and sea rescue.

The 220-page paperback is now available in Easons and all good book shops. For further information, contact Barry Foley on 086 – 8196138 or e-mail to ssts@eircom.net.

Review of the Cork County Development Plan, 2003

The County Development Plan is the strategic policy document by which all development in County Cork is guided. The preparation of a County Development Plan is a statutory procedure and a new plan must be redrafted every seven years. In January of this year, Cork County Council began its review of the existing County Development Plan, published in 2003.

The first round of public consultation in relation to the drafting of the new plan took place from January – March 2007. Over 960 submissions were received and these have been used to progress to the next stage of the new plan's preparation.

A Draft Plan was circulated to all members of Cork County Council in October and was adopted on 26th November. This Draft Plan is now to go on public display from 14th December 2007 – 22nd February 2008. All are invited to view the Draft Plan and submissions from the public on the Draft Plan are welcome. Further information may be obtained at www.corkcoco.ie.

Howard Holdings public information

Passage West Town Council is to meet with Howard Holdings and its architects, Cullinane Stratton Reynolds, on Tuesday, December 4th at 7pm, to view the details of the proposed plans for the redevelopment of the Royal Victoria Dockyard. Public consultation will take place during the following two days after this meeting. The venue will be the former Credit Union Building on Strand Street and Howard Holdings will be organising a leaflet drop of all houses in Passage West to provide further information on opening hours. A scale model of the proposed development will be displayed.

This is a long-awaited viewing of what must be one of the most important developments to Passage West in the last 50 years. We have been advised that the details being presented at the public meetings are not a fait accompli and that Howard Holdings will examine any suggested changes and evaluate whether they should be incorporated prior to planning. So please, voice your opinions!

Mulled wine and mince pies

A mulled wine and mince pie night will be held in Monkstown Bay Sailing Club on Wednesday, December 5th, at 7pm. I have been asked to give a slide show and talk on the history of Passage West and Monkstown on the night. Admission is €10. All are welcome and proceeds from the night are in aid of CHASE (Cork Harbour Alliance for a Safe Environment).

With you and your support, I am working through the Passage West/Monkstown Town Council to help our community realise its potential as a place to live, work and play. Please contact me by e-mail at info@marciadalton.net, by mail at 22, Hillcrest, Pembroke Wood, Passage West or by telephone 4863293 / 085-7333852.