

Cllr. Marcia D'Alton writes ...

Public meeting with ECAD

On Thursday 19th July, Passage West Town Council invited ECAD (East Cork Area Development) to host a public meeting to impart information in relation to funding opportunities under the LEADER and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programmes. ECAD is the umbrella organisation for distribution of funds from both programmes in this area of County Cork. Over 20 representatives of community, development and sporting groups in Passage West and Monkstown attended at the Passage West Soccer Club to see how the available funding could potentially serve their needs.

Suzanne Kearney from ECAD and Bill Thorne from Exodia Consultants explained that funding through LEADER had increased to €425 million nationally over the 2007 – 2013 period. This funding is to be divided between 40 groups to finance approved projects enhancing economic, amenity and cultural development in the local community. ECAD has assisted some 350 such projects to get off the ground over the last few years, including a craft network throughout East Cork selling directly to the public, an airboat enterprise in Youghal, upgrades of community halls, playgrounds, family resource centres, the redevelopment of a convent for young growth businesses, village and town enhancement, etc. The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme is targeted specifically towards benefiting the youth, the elderly, lower income earners and on achieving equality.

The function of ECAD in this area is to help Passage West/Monkstown to put together a programme of targeted investment through which funds for both of these programmes can be accessed. This Social Economic Profile and Plan must be completed by September. The function of the Passage West/Monkstown residents is now to decide what projects are vital to the economic and social development of their area over the next six years. These will guide the drawing up of the Social Economic Profile and Plan. Projects that are not included can still qualify for LEADER or Social Inclusion funding, provided that they contribute to the overall aims for Passage West/Monkstown.

All interested parties were invited to a meeting of Passage West and Monkstown community, development and sporting groups on Thursday, 26th July and Wednesday, 1st August in the Passage West Town Hall. The purpose of the meetings was to advance that list of projects for which funding will be sought with the assistance of ECAD. Details are available at www.passagewestmonkstown.ie. The list will then be brought to ECAD in a further meeting on Thursday, 16th August (venue to be confirmed).

Broadband update

Passage West Town Council has been wholly dissatisfied with the state of Fairy Hill and Chapel Hill, Monkstown and with the condition of Passage West town centre as a consequence of the recent broadband works. It has also been concerned about the condition of the Passage West – Hop Island amenity walk along the old railway line subsequent to the laying of the broadband ducting.

To follow up on these issues, Passage West Town Council requested a meeting with Laing O'Rourke, the contractors laying the broadband on behalf of Cork County Council. Laing O'Rourke told the Town Council that the final reinstatement of Chapel Hill and Fairy Hill had been delayed because Laing O'Rourke had been seeking agreement from Cork County Council to resurface the whole width of both roads. Their narrow width and poor condition meant that the contracted reinstatement of merely the trench width would be ineffective in achieving road safety. Initially, Cork County Council had agreed. However, subsequently, Cork County Council had reneged on its decision and had instructed Laing O'Rourke to reinstate merely the width of the trench dug for installation of the broadband ducting.

Passage West Town Council was entirely dissatisfied with this decision and wrote to Cork County Council, asking that permission would be granted to Laing O'Rourke to tar and chip the entire width of both Chapel Hill and Fairy Hill. The response from Cork County Council dated 28th July reiterates that only the trench width is to be reinstated.

The delay in the completion of Passage West town centre is because An Garda Siochana has requested that Laing O'Rourke should work in the town centre only on weekends. As there are merely two days of work in finishing the town centre, Passage West Town Council has supported Laing O'Rourke in its request to An Garda Siochana that the laying of ducting and road reinstatement should take place during the working week so that it can be completed as soon as possible. Laing O'Rourke has committed to notifying the local traders of when this work is going to take place.

HSE request for resource families for teenagers

The HSE (Health Service Executive) is looking for resource families in the Passage West, Monkstown, Douglas, Carrigaline and Mahon areas to give a positive experience of family life to 16 – 18 year olds who are on the brink of leaving institutionalised care.

This is a new departure and a move away from traditional fostering. Resource families will have access to all supports granted to the HSE care units and will receive some training. Once resource families have been matched to a child, that child will begin its relationship with the family on a respite basis for weekends only. In time, the child will live with the family on a full time basis. Financial support will be offered to assist with the upkeep of the child.

The aim of this initiative is to assist children who may never have had a break in life to understand what it is to live within a family before they themselves face the world, potentially in time to start a family of their own. Without such an experience, it is exceedingly difficult for them to teach their children about a close family network. Consequently, their children may be open to many of the same disadvantages which their parents suffered, often through no fault of their own.

The HSE would like to get a sense of the level of interest in the wider community in becoming involved in the resource family initiative. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Neil Glavin at neil.glavin@mailp.hse.ie.

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.