

Bonfire Night Party in Pembroke Wood

There was a Bonfire Night Party in Pembroke Wood on Sunday night. This was the second year in succession that the Residents Association organised a Bonfire Night Party and this year's event was even bigger and better than last year's.

Traditionally, four bonfires were lit throughout Passage West on the evening of the 23rd June. But in more recent years, the bonfires had increasingly moved away from the traditional St. John's Eve theme and towards an excuse for getting rid of unwanted rubbish. So last year, in conjunction with the Cork County Joint Policing Committee, the town of Passage West offered itself as a pilot for implementing a bonfire-free zone.

In three of the four traditional bonfire sites, signs indicating no tolerance of illegal burning were erected. But in Pembroke Wood, the fourth and traditionally largest bonfire site, the Residents Association decided to build a clean bonfire with specially purchased timber and to organise a party for the children.

The experience was so positive that this year, the Residents Association held Pembroke Wood's second Bonfire Night Party. The night was mild, the sun shone and a great crowd gathered to enjoy the festivities. Volunteers organised games for the children, including penalty shoot-outs and basketball. Face painting was offered for all those prepared to wait out the queue. An on-site stall sold treats and drinks. The aroma of cooking wafted over the green from the barbeques.

The evening's fun began at 7.30pm, when the music of the DJ kicked the green into life. The bonfire was lit at 8.30pm. It roared into life, the flames leaping high as they were caught by the wind. Children gazed upwards in awe, somewhat mesmerized and quite overwhelmed. Even when the fire had died down and the crowds had gone home, volunteers stayed with the bonfire until it was put out entirely.

The Residents Association is very grateful to those who helped to make the Bonfire Night Party such a success. Passage West Town Council contributed financially to the running of the event. The Cork County Council Carrigaline Area Office was on standby to assist with any illegal dumping. The presence of the gardai helped with maintaining good, clean fun. Passage West Joint Policing Committee liaised between the Area Office and the Gardai. And of course, particular thanks to all the volunteers who gave their time so cheerfully and willingly.

St. John's Eve experience in Passage West has come so far in two years. This year, there was not a single incidence of illegal dumping or burning in any part of the town. The people of Pembroke Wood and beyond are delighted with the Bonfire Night Party concept. To organise the event takes much energy, but it is a model of community co-operation.