

Caherslee News Tralee Times

www.traleetimes.com

Easter 2009

Vote No. 1 **Leonard O'Donnell**

**Tralee Town Council needs change.
New vision, new ideas, new initiatives.
NEW PEOPLE**

If you are unhappy with current council members and how they have represented you now is your opportunity to change that.

I ask for your vote on Friday, June 5th.

I will propose action in favour of the positive development of our locality in accordance with your wishes.

Your views are of primary interest to me.

Over the next number of weeks I will be calling to your door and will be asking you for your support, your VOTE, and your VIEWS so that I can represent you in Tralee Town Council.

Please take that opportunity to let me know how you would like me to best represent you, on Tralee Town Council

**Tel. 087 76 152 76
info@leonardodonnell.com
www.leonardodonnell.com**

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Caherslee News / Tralee Times
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EDUCATION

Recently I have begun the task of providing educational material on the Tralee times web-site. This material includes, at present, notes, revision questions and powerpoint slides on various aspects of the Junior Certificate history syllabus.

This material is free to those who wish to use it and it will enhance their notes and text that are used in school.

I do hope it is of use to some as I have been working at it for some time.

Tralee Rugby Club

In the past month I have witnessed some 'tackles and grunts' as I watched Tralee Rugby Club serve up two successive wins in O'Dowd Park, Tralee.

It is well worth the trip but maybe not for the faint hearted! Log onto their website for fixtures. www.traleerugby.com

Irish Rugby has Dawned!

Munster have been successful in the European Cup and now after many years of toil and trouble the Irish Rugby team have at last reached the summit.

Well done to all concerned.

Extend Summer Time!

It has been proposed that summertime 'by the clock' anyway should be extended from the beginning of March to the end of the first week in November. Apparently this can save huge amounts on fuel costs and possible reduce deaths on our roads.

A pity it does not apply to actual sunshine!

**SIR ROGER CASEMENT
SUMMER SCHOOL**

The recent move to establish a Sir Roger Casement Summer school in Tralee is to be welcomed. I understand it has received widespread local and national support. The idea is a Tralee one, is hugely innovative and will be of interest not only to historians, educationalists, politicians and the media but will also be of great interest to the people of Tralee.

Should it be a success it will have a positive economic impact in Tralee bringing, it is anticipated, over €1 million euro to the town in early August. It will allow Tralee play host to the very first summer school of its kind anywhere in the world. I fully support this concept. It will add value and prestige to our town. Best of luck to the organising committee.

"Spring is when life's alive in everything."

Christina Rossetti
English poet (1830 - 1894)

Hate Root Vegetables? Try a smooth Root Vegetable Soup Recipe!

This soup is very nutritious and tasty – even for root haters!

For 4 generous servings you'll need:

- 2 onions, finely chopped.
- 1tbsp unsalted butter.
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed.
- 150g chopped celeriac root
- 2 medium parsnips, chopped.
- 100g white cabbage, shredded.
- 4 medium carrots, chopped.
- 800ml vegetable stock.
- Salt and pepper.
- Pinch nutmeg.
- 1tsp each of dried tarragon and dried dill.

Heat the butter in a large saucepan and soften the onion gently. After five minutes add the garlic and stir for another minute. Now add the chopped vegetables, stir to coat them in butter and cover, then leave to soften for 15 minutes on a low heat. Pour in the stock, add a generous pinch of salt and pepper, and add the herbs. Simmer for 20 minutes or until the veg are cooked. Cool slightly before blending, then reheat and serve with a spoonful of crème fraiche and chopped chives. <http://www.vegetableexpert.co.uk>

Climate and Weather

Over Christmas we had wonderfully dry weather and also in recent weeks we did well on that front—do excuse the pun! It may have been cold and frosty but at least it was dry. Had we experienced such high pressure during last summer for prolonged periods we would have been complaining about the heat and the lack of rain(!) Temperatures during the summer months in such high pressure conditions would surely have reached the mid-20s. Yes, I hear you ...I know we live in Ireland...and essentially there is no guarantee...no long term predictions. But I also hear you say...do we not get at least one very good summer each decade.....well maybe!

Scenic Views and Photographs

I do hope that those of you who are expert photographers—no excuses these days with the digital cameras—took advantage of the bright winter and early spring days to take some fabulous photographs of the scenic beauty of our landscape.

If you wish you can send some to me and I'll put them on: www.traleetimes.com site. Just e-mail them to: editor@traleetimes.com and include your name and the location of the photo.

After all it may be some time yet before we get such beautiful 'scenic weather' at this time of the year again!

Tagging Criminals

In 2003, there were 2,951 breaches of bail compared with 5,424 in 2007.

Time and time again, offenders released on bail have re-offended. Between 2003 and 2007 there was a 100% increase in the number of crimes committed by those out on bail.

In 2006 the Government passed legislation to electronically tag prisoners on early release. Not a single prisoner has been tagged since then, yet the early release programme continues apace. In short: The Government promise to tag sex offenders is unlikely ever to see the light of day.

**Gardening
Hedges and.....**

With the evenings getting longer and milder maybe now is the time to get 'on top of' your hedges and etc....

It will make the work easier later in the year.

Kerry GAA
Another campaign—another All-Ireland?

School Transport Costs

The cost of school transport will shoot up by as much as 200% later this year for the families of approx. 53,000 students. Families have already been landed with 17 new stealth taxes in the Budget 2009, with many more to come in the emergency Budget. The new school transport costs are:

- Fees for junior cycle pupils will have shot up by 203% since the start of 2008, from €99 to a new high of €168;
- Senior cycle fees will have increased by 96% since the start of 2008, from €153 to €300;
- And family tickets have shot up by 31% from €495 at the start of 2008 to €650.

The imminent review of catchment areas could deprive thousands of families of State school transport, which would have a serious impact in rural areas. Just when the country should be focusing more on educating the next generation

Child Deaths

Alarming figures published by the Irish Times recently suggest that 20 children have died in care in the last six years and, in the case of nine of these children, the cause of death was described as 'medical issues' and no further details were provided. No automatic investigation is triggered when a child dies in care or when a child reported to be at risk dies in circumstances in which necessary intervention has not occurred.

"For every action there is an equal and opposite government programme."
Bob Wells

Government Prices Rip-Off

The CSO has confirmed that prices in the private sector fell by 0.1% in the last 12 months, but that prices controlled by the Government have continued to soar, such as:

- Gas up 20% in the 12 months to January
- Health insurance up 19%
- Electricity up 17%
- Bus transport up 13%
- In-patient hospital services up 9%
- Out-patient hospital services up 7%
- Rail transport up 9%
- Education services up 6%

Prices for Government-regulated services rose by 14% in the year to February, while prices for Government-provided services rose by over 6% over the same period. Price rises in these sectors are actually increasing, while the rest of the economy slips deeper into depression. This is in stark contrast to the private sector, where prices overall are falling. The Government must act immediately to introduce significant energy price cuts, and a freeze on the price of other Government-regulated and provided services.

The Government Press

Conferences—Expensive!

The Government has spent over €400,000 of taxpayers' cash in the past two years on hosting press conferences and policy launches.

This is another classic example of Ministers and their staff existing in a parallel universe where the motto appears to be 'do as I say, not as I do'.

Every euro counts when it comes to tackling the massive hole in the Exchequer finances so it is hard to see how the Government can splash so much cash on these launches. As the table below shows, an average of €45,000 was spent per Department:

Table showing amount of money spent by Government Departments on press and policy launches, 2007-2008

| Government Department | Spend |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Finance | €80,272 |
| Communications | €75,295 |
| Education | €55,127.39 |
| Taoiseach | €41,303 |
| Agriculture | €35,896.38 |
| Enterprise, Trade & Employment | €31,621 |
| Foreign Affairs | €18,756 |
| Justice | €16,133.49 |
| Health | €15,694.20 |
| Transport | €11,820.25 |
| Defence | €11,374.16 |
| Social & Family Affairs | €10,110 |
| Environment | € 5,249 |
| Total | € 428,645.87 |

While the Government will undoubtedly point to the relative small amount this represents in overall spending, it is surely not necessary to splurge this amount of cash on simple press conferences and policy launches.

The laying of the rail line from Killarney to Tralee was completed 150 years ago, in July 1859

320 on trolleys a 25% increase

A&E overcrowding continues to be a major problem in the health service and there are signs that the closure of beds and the ongoing loss of bed days from delayed discharges are making things worse.

While patients continue to endure the indignity and safety issues that come with being treated on a trolley, the Government's response has been to close 600 more beds, on top of the 500 that are already out of commission, and ignore calls to avail of vacant long stay beds for those patients awaiting discharge from acute care

Latest attack on elderly

The introduction of an inspection system is a cynical revenue raising exercise that is another stealth tax on the elderly.

The fee now facing nursing homes, and therefore nursing home patients, appears entirely unjustifiable. The inspection team will be made up of 48 inspectors and 21 staff, according to reports. With the new fee of €190 per bed generating about €6 million this works out at a cost of around €85,000 per staff member. While this will not all be salaries, it seems exceptionally high. If this is the structure the Government has put in place it must explain it in detail and An Bord Snip Nua should be asked to examine it. There have to be suspicions that this move is in reality a cynical revenue-raising exercise

Orthopaedic services in Cork & Kerry

Orthopaedic services in Cork and Kerry are below the national average.

The HSE has released figures revealing the number of orthopaedic surgeons employed in HSE areas compared to the populations of those areas.

These figures confirm that the HSE South area has just one Orthopaedic Surgeon (whole time equivalent) for every 57,962 people based on the 2006 population census.

The average national figure was one orthopaedic surgeon (whole time equivalent) per 49,485.

The differences in some areas are stark and raise concerns that in some cases the quality of the health care service an orthopaedic patient receives may depend more on geography than anything else. In the HSE West area there are over 24 posts for a population of 1,010,690 while in the HSE South, which includes Cork & Kerry, there are fewer than 19 posts for a population of 1,080,999.

These discrepancies must be reviewed and tackled without delay. It is unfair to patients and frontline medical staff that situations are allowed to develop where patients are put on waiting lists until they can see under-resourced front line staff.

1 in 10 people on dole

CSO reveals that the live register jumped by 26,700 people, almost 1,000 a day. Irish unemployment is now fourth highest in the European Union. Irish unemployment is even higher than Iceland and Latvia, two of Europe's worst performers. Community Employment Schemes are an effective way of preventing the newly unemployed from slipping into long-term unemployment. The number of schemes has halved in recent years from 40,000 in 2003 to just 22,000 now.

€100million Prefabs

The Government has spent an astonishing €112 million on renting prefabs since 2006 according to new figures released by the Department of Education.

| YEAR | COST of Temporary Accommodation |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 2006 | €24.5m |
| 2007 | €35.5m |
| 2008 | €52.86m |
| TOTAL | €112.86m |

The average yearly rental charge for a prefab is at least €12,000

The downturn in the economy provides a new opportunity to radically increase the school building programme over the next few years. Better value for money has to be a key of that programme. It makes no sense that we continue to spend such a huge sum of money renting out prefab buildings in Irish schools, when what is needed is permanent accommodation in primary and post-primary education.

Government spend on school meals

The School Meals Programme by the Government has increased by 800% for €4 million a year in 2004

| YEAR | COST |
|------|--------|
| 2004 | €4.6m |
| 2005 | €8.4m |
| 2006 | €13.6m |
| 2007 | €28.2m |
| 2008 | €32.4m |

Question: Is there value for money in the above, while other educational resources are being slashed!



Leonard O' Donnell

from Tralee, for Tralee

VOTE No. 1

Tralee Town Council Election

Friday, June 5th, 2009

Coastal Protection— €30 million to protect eroding Kerry coast

IT COULD cost more than €30 million to protect Kerry's most vulnerable stretches of coastline from erosion, a report has estimated. However, the council has no money to do the work and Government coffers are empty. A mere €3m was available for coastal protection, nationally, last year.

The crisis was graphically highlighted this week when erosion created a new, five-acre island at Rossbeigh, cutting off a large chunk of the sand dune area at a popular blue flag beach just off the Ring of Kerry.

Some people in the area have now offered to provide machinery and labour, free of charge, to prevent further damage.

Kerry has approximately 12% of the country's coastline and the second highest amount of 'soft' coastline — areas vulnerable to erosion, including sand dunes, glacial cliffs, marine wetlands and estuary zones.

The problem was spectacularly illustrated by a landslide in Dunquin, last year, following which a new one kilometre stretch of road-way had to be built.

In 2003, it was estimated that of Kerry's 684km of coastline, 378km was soft, with about 41km in need of urgent attention.

The cost of protecting the 41km was then conservatively estimated at €26m, but the figure is well over €30m at this stage, according to the council report released yesterday.

In 2003, a prioritised programme of work needed at 10 vulnerable locations was submitted to the Department of Marines for funding, with an estimated cost of almost €11m.

But, only a fraction of the work regarded as necessary five years ago has since been carried out due to a funds shortage.

In early 2007, however, the council had to proceed with emergency works at Inch, in the interest of public safety.

The works cost €4m, with grant aid of €900,000, coming from the Department of Agriculture and €150,000 from the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The Department of Environment allocated €950,000.

However, there is still a €2m shortfall.

"The level of funding provided nationally for coastal protection works is totally inadequate, and this has been highlighted in previous responses to notices of motions by this council," said a council spokesman.

Irish Examiner

Some Benefits of Unemployment!—Comment

Perhaps this is the type of work that could be undertaken during these troubled times. Those who have been unfortunate enough to lose their jobs in recent times could facilitate this work on a 2 to 3 day a week basis while still collecting unemployment benefit.

There is an excess of idle machinery available, there are many construction workers unemployed. Identifying the most vulnerable areas prone to coastal erosion and commencing some form of coastal protection work might not be a bad idea. Such work might even have some economic benefits. Coastal areas would be cleaned up and more attractive especially where tourist activities such as golf, fishing, surfing and walking are concerned.

Such coastal protection work could be coupled with preparing and improving new and old walking and hiking routes in more remote areas. Such schemes would, if properly thought out, develop our rural and some urban areas for future tourism needs.

Secondary and regional roads, forestry and alternative energy projects might also benefit from such schemes.

Let us use some positive programmes and initiatives to further develop our existing facilities and infrastructure. Work such as this would have a positive effect on those who are unemployed and might even create and facilitate opportunity and initiatives for them.

After all is it not better to try to control future events rather than to sit back and wait and let the future control us.

Castleisland By-pass

According to the National roads Authority website (www.nra.ie) the Castleisland By-pass is at tender stage and due to start this year, 2009.

Apparently this by-pass is the only new road project to begin in 2009. Given that it is almost 10 years since this project was first given the go ahead, I do hope it will go ahead.

Castleisland is a gateway to Co. Kerry and the people of Castleisland and indeed of Co. Kerry have waited far too long for this project to be delivered and for the relief it will bring to the town and to road users in general.

"Education is the best provision for old age."

from Diogenes Laertius,

Aristotle,

(384 BC - 322 BC)

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

Alan Kay

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