



Simon Coveney TD

Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government

Cork South Central News, September 2016

Dear Resident,

In May I was appointed as Minister with specific responsibility for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government to focus on the challenge of tackling the housing crisis. Housing is without doubt, one of the biggest challenges facing our country today.

We have a significant shortage of housing supply and need to use every feasible means to meet this challenge. It is imperative that every family has a home. We are determined to deal with the dramatic under supply of housing and the effect it has on people and communities.

I launched The Action Plan for Housing in July – Rebuilding Ireland. Designed to accelerate housing supply in this country. Rebuilding Ireland is tackling our country's housing shortage and commits to a major increase in delivery of homes year on year to 2021. It comprises of five pillars:



addressing
homelessness



accelerating
social housing



building
more homes



improving the
rental sector



utilising
existing
housing

www.rebuildingireland.ie

This action-driven plan will result in a dramatic increase in the delivery of homes in Cork, and across the country. By actively and constructively working together, we will accelerate supply and transform housing in a way that will affect every community in Ireland. I am determined that visible evidence of this Plan's effectiveness will be seen across the country in the months and years ahead.

I will also host a housing forum in Carrigaline on the 30th September. I will be there to meet and discuss what the housing plan means for Cork County Council management teams, as well as councillors and stakeholders. I met with Cork City Council earlier this month in Cork City Hall.

If you wish to contact me to raise any issues, local or national, please do not hesitate in contacting my constituency office, which is located on Main Street, Carrigaline 021 4374200 or email simon.coveney@oir.ie

Yours sincerely,
Simon Coveney TD



Pictured with Minister Leo Varadkar and Senator Deirdre Clune and the opening of the 60th Intreo office in Carrigaline.

WORKING PARENTS TO BENEFIT FROM EXPANDED FREE PRESCHOOL SCHEME

I welcome the recent expansion of the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme. The free preschool scheme means that thousands of extra children – reaching three years old – are going to be able to access free preschool places in Cork.

The expansion of the scheme will be of huge benefit to working parents. Childcare is a big issue for many families and it is estimated that for each place on the scheme, a family can save between €2,500 - €4,000 in childcare costs. A saving of up to €4,000 will certainly help ease the financial burden of childcare for working parents.

As well as the financial benefits, international studies show that children who take part in schemes such as the ECCE, have better outcomes later in life, particularly those children experiencing disadvantage.

To find a childcare provider near you, see www.dcy.gov.ie.



EDUCATION

BACK TO SCHOOL ALLOWANCE

It's that time of the year again, the summer holidays are over and children are back to school. For some parents the return to school is one of the most challenging times of the year, financially. The support provided through the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance helps parents with the cost of the new school year. The Department of Social Protection this year allocated €38.8 million for payments with eligible families receiving €100.00 for children between the age of 4 and 11 years and €200.00 for children between 12 and 22 years. Those eligible for the allowance can still apply, forms are available to download on www.welfare.ie. All applications must be submitted before the closing date on Friday the 30th of September.

FUNDING FOR USI STUDENT HOUSING OFFICER

I recently announced €49,000 in funding for the Union of Students of Ireland, this money will support their appointment of a Student Housing Officer. The purpose of this new role is to help identify additional accommodation, including digs and rooms in private homes. The development of purpose built student accommodation will take students out of the private rental market and will free up private rented accommodation in Cork.

SUSI GRANTS

SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) is the awarding authority for all higher and further education grants. SUSI offers funding to eligible students in approved full-time third-level education in Ireland and offers support to all types of students, from school leavers to mature students returning to education. To find out if you are eligible for a grant, or for more information see www.susi.ie.



Daragh Cashman and Susanne Hayes help Minister Coveney turn the sod on Enable Ireland Cork's new Children's Centre at Curraheen in Cork. Provision (Daragh McSweeney Photographer)

NEW GARDA RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

The Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD has launched a new recruitment campaign for members of An Garda Síochána. This new campaign will ensure that the service is renewed and has the capacity to provide visible, responsive and effective policing to every community throughout the country. To fulfil the Government's commitment to increase the strength of An Garda Síochána to 15,000 members an additional 3,200 new Garda members will be recruited on a phased basis over the next four years. This is in addition to the 1,200 that will have been recruited by the end of this year. Applications must be made through www.publicjobs.ie.

RENT SUPPLEMENT & HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT INCREASE

Cabinet agreed in June to increase rent limits under the Rent Supplement and Housing Assistance Payment schemes. The new limits mean that people who cannot afford the full cost of private rented accommodation will receive greater assistance from the State. This increase will provide more stability for tenants and reduce the danger of families becoming homeless when their rent is increased. For more information, see www.welfare.ie

PATERNITY LEAVE

New parents (other than the mother of the child) are now entitled to paternity leave from employment or self-employment following birth or adoption of a child. The Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016 provides for statutory paternity leave of 2 weeks, which can start at any time within the first 6 months following the birth or adoption placement. For more information, see www.welfare.ie

WORKING GROUP ON COST OF INSURANCE

A Working Group reviewing the cost of insurance, chaired by Minister of State Eoghan Murphy T.D., is focusing in its first phase on factors which influence the cost of motor insurance. Its remit is to identify immediate and longer term measures which can address increasing costs, while bearing in mind the need to maintain a stable insurance sector. The group hopes to have identified the priority actions required to tackle the costs of insurance by the end of October, which will form the basis for an update report to the Minister for Finance, Minister Noonan.

LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWS

BALLINHASSIG/BALLYGARVAN

- Drainage work is under way in Rearour, and surface dressing is expected to start in the next few weeks.

BISHOPSTOWN/WILTON

- A series of changes on the Wilton Road, Sarsfield Road, Victoria Cross and Western Road have been proposed by Cork City Council. If implemented there will be improved facilities for all road users, including bus users, cyclists, pedestrians and motorists.

SKEHARD ROAD

- The first phase of the Skehard Road Upgrade (Parkhill Estate to the Church Road Junction) is scheduled to commence construction in October 2016 and work is expected to be complete by September 2017. The second phase (Church Road to the CSO Junction) is programmed to commence construction in late 2017 and be complete by the third quarter of 2018.

PASSAGE WEST/CARRIGALINE

- Cork County Council has been awarded €77,141 in funding by Government to develop the Cork Harbour Greenway. Combined off-road cycle and walking routes and recreational trails developed along abandoned rail lines are often referred to as Greenways. Cork County Council are now actively engaged in the development of these greenway routes, including the Passage West to Carrigaline Greenway.



SPOTLIGHT ON... CROSSHAVEN



CAMDEN FORT MEAGHER

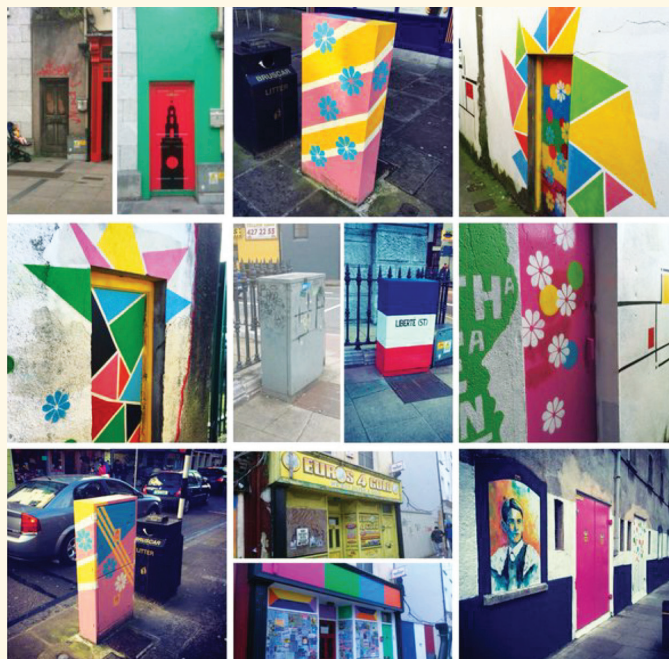
Camden Fort Meagher is internationally recognised as being "One of the finest remaining examples of a classical Coastal Artillery Fort in the world". And this year it was named number 4 on the list of top things to do in Cork by Trip Advisor and number 3 on a list of the top 17 Secret Things to Do in Cork. It is great to see that hard work and dedication of the amazing volunteers, staff and scheme workers at Camden Fort pay off, long may it continue.

INTERNATIONAL REDHEAD CONVENTION

More than 2,500 people attended the International Redhead Convention in Crosshaven this year, the event was a huge success with redheads travelling from as far away as Australia, Hawaii, and Canada to attend. The unique event has helped promote Crosshaven to an international audience and I would like to congratulate all involved on another successful year.



SPOTLIGHT ON... CORK CITY

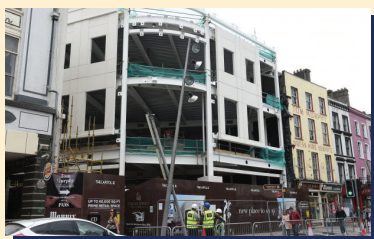


REIMAGINE CORK PROJECTS

I would like to congratulate the fantastic work being done throughout Cork City by the Reimagine Cork team. Reimagine Cork is a community led initiative focused on making Cork beautiful by rejuvenating laneways, urban green spaces, & derelict buildings. www.reimaginecork.com

FUNDING FOR THE GLUCKSMAN GALLERY & CORK BUTTER MUSEUM

The Glucksman Gallery and the Cork Butter Museum have both been awarded grants under the Local and Regional Museums Funding Scheme 2016. The Glucksman Gallery has been awarded €6,375 while the Cork Butter Museum was awarded €1,361.



CAPITOL CINEMA REDEVELOPMENT REACHES MIDWAY POINT

The €50 million redevelopment of The Capitol site on Grand Parade has reached the significant halfway point in the build. This project is very much on schedule and is due to be completed by February 2017. This is the first big development to happen in Cork City in many years and I have no doubt that it will breathe a new lease of life into the city.

PÁIRC UÍ CHAOIMH

It is encouraging to see that the redevelopment Páirc Uí Chaoimh beginning to take shape, this is one of the city's biggest construction projects and is well on track to be completed by June 2017.

EVENT CENTRE

Work has started on the €53m Cork Event Centre. Demolition crews have started dismantling parts of the old Beamish & Crawford building that will not be incorporated into the 5,000-seat venue. All parties involved are fully committed to the project. Live Nation are committed and a detailed internal design process is taking place. We are now moving into a new phase.



SENIOR CITIZEN ENTITLEMENTS

GRANTS FOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS

The Housing Aid for Older People Scheme is used to improve the condition of an older person's home if the person is aged over 66 and living in poor housing conditions. Application forms available from **Cork City or County Council**.

The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme is designed for works to address mobility problems in the home, installation of grab rails, level access showers, access ramps or stair lifts. Application forms available from **Cork City or County Council**.

The Home Insulation Scheme aims to improve the energy efficiency and warmth of homes of people with low incomes and is operated by the SEAI. www.seai.ie or **Lo-call 1850 376 666** for more information.

EXTRA HOME HELP HOURS SECURED

The Department of Health has secured an additional €40 million to provide more home help hours and home care packages. This should make a real difference in terms of ensuring people can leave hospital when they are medically fit to do so and have appropriate supports in their own home.

NEW WEBSITE FOR CARERS IN CORK

The new national website dedicated to carers can be found at www.hse.ie/carers. The website is a useful one stop shop for carers, providing them with useful information and will support people in Cork who are caring for relatives and loved ones with a disability or illness. It is also a signposting service, pointing carers in the direction of relevant HSE services including community services, such as home support and respite; and financial benefits such as the Medical Card, Carers Allowance and the Carers Support Grant (formerly Respite Grant).

MEDICAL CARD/GP VISIT CARD

To qualify for a medical card your weekly income must be below a certain level for your family size. Cash income, savings, investments and property (except for your own home) are taken into account for the means test. If you do not qualify for a medical card on income grounds you may qualify for a GP visit card. Everyone aged 70 or over, ordinarily resident in Ireland, is eligible for free GP care regardless of income. Forms and information are available on www.medicalcard.ie **Lo-call 1890 252 919**. Register for GP Visit Card Over 70s scheme on www.pcrsonline.ie

TRAINING & EDUCATION

INTREO

Intreo is a new service from the Department of Social Protection. Intreo is a single point of contact for all employment and income supports and has been designed to provide a more streamlined approach offering practical, tailored employment services and supports for jobseekers and employers. There are a range of employment support measures designed to encourage and support social welfare recipients to return to work and take up self-employment opportunities.

www.intreo.ie

Hanover St, Cork. T: (021) 480 6800

Carrigaline T: (021) 2386900

SPRINGBOARD+

Springboard+ offers 5,855 free places on 181 courses leading to awards at certificate, degree and post-graduate level. Springboard+ is primarily targeted at jobseekers with a previous history of employment.

www.springboard.ie

BACK TO EDUCATION PROGRAMME

If you missed out on educational opportunities when you were younger or if you need to update your skills to compete more successfully for a job, the Department of Social Protection may be able to help. The Back to Education Programme is designed to help unemployed people, lone parents and people with disabilities improve their skills and qualifications and return to full-time or part-time education while continuing to get income support. The programmes range from basic foundation courses through to third level postgraduate courses.

www.welfare.ie

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