



# The Forum

## Contents

## Newsletter for Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Community Forum

The Working Group Wishes You All A Very Happy and Peaceful Christmas



- Page Two  
» **Strategic Policy Committees**
- Page Three  
» **Community Forum Workplan 2007**
- Page Four  
» **Volunteering**
- Page Five  
» **Christmas Insurance Scheme**
- Page Six  
» **Festival Of World Cultures Summer School**
- Page Seven  
» **Fostering**
- Page Eight  
» **Comhairle ne nÓg**

## Community Forum Afloat!

**M**embers of both the Forum Working Group and Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) spent an informative and diverting training day on 7 October aboard the Irish Ferries *Ulysses* on a return trip to Holyhead.



*The Ferry Boat Ulysses*

The purpose of the training was to review the background and history of the setting up of both the Forum and the SPC's and to examine ways to improve the feedback mechanisms available to the members in reporting back to the nominating bodies.

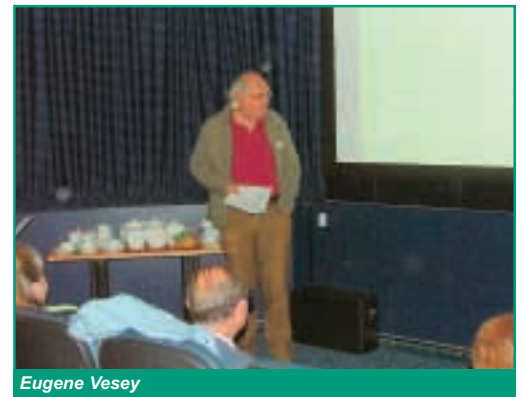


*Director of Community and Enterprise, Mary Mallon*

In the morning, the Director of Community and Enterprise, Mary Mallon, outlined the historical background to the setting up of each. As part of the reform of Local Government, which has taken place since the early 1990s, Community Enterprise Groups were set up. These later became the County Development Boards while the setting up of the Strategic Policy Committees started about 1997. One vital issue for the Forum was funding and proposals for this were contained in the September 2000 White Paper "Supporting Voluntary Activity".

Whatever progress has been made in establishing and maintaining the Forum would not have taken place without the appropriate funding. Such funding for example, facilitated the appointment of our most energetic and capable Development Officer Willie Morton who organised and "supervised" the day's outing.

Mary concluded with a list of the challenges facing members of the Working Group, especially the need to attract and retain members and to improve the feedback between members and their nominating organisations. There is also a need to improve ability to participate in CDB structures and help develop policy from a county perspective.



*Eugene Vesey*

Also during the morning, Eugene Vesey, CEO Corporate Services, gave a presentation on the Strategic Policy Committees (see page 2).



*Evelyn Smith*

Damien O Sullivan (Working Group Chair), John Nolan (Working Group Treasurer), Evelyn Smith (Environment SPC member) and Jim Carson CEO Community and Enterprise Department) also spoke during the morning session.

The afternoon session dealt with the process of feedback and was facilitated by Torry Schellhorn.

# STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

The establishment of the Strategic Policy Committees arose from the reform of Local Government procedures during the mid 1990's. The same reform also gave rise to the County Development Boards.

Both of these institutions provide an opportunity for consultation with a variety of organisations on a wide range of matters affecting the lives and environment of every person in the county.

The intentions of the SPC's are to help enhance local democracy and strengthen policy-making capacity. The membership of each committee has about 18 members with two thirds coming from County Councillors and the balance from organisations with specific specialist knowledge.

There are five committees in Dun Laoghaire:

- 1 Culture, Community Development and Amenities (CCDA)**  
*Chair Councillor Larry Butler*
- 2 Environment**  
*Chair Councillor John Bailey*
- 3 Economic Development and Planning (EDP)**  
*Chair Councillor Carrie Smyth*
- 4 Housing**  
*Chair Councillor Aidan Culhane*
- 5 Transportation**  
*Chair Councillor Tom Joyce*

Each Committee is chaired by a Councillor and the five chairs, together with the Cathaoirleach form a Corporate Policy Group.

The role of each Committee is:

- ◆ Assist the Council in formulation development and review of policy of a strategic nature
- ◆ Be involved from an early stage
- ◆ Consider policy options
- ◆ Take account of Council objectives, legal requirements and financial resources
- ◆ Make recommendations to the Council via the Chairperson of each committee.

Listed below are some examples of the issues considered by the SPC's:

- ◆ CCDA: Arts Strategy, Library Development Programme
- ◆ Environment: Litter Management Plan, Water Services Assessment of Need, Energy
- ◆ Housing: Scheme of Letting Priorities ("Points" Scheme), Review of Housing Strategy.
- ◆ EDP Progress Report on County Development Plan
- ◆ Transportation: Review of parking byelaws, bus services, transport infrastructure.

The whole SPC process is still in its early days as far as definite impact on Council policy is concerned. For example, since March 2005 when the present SPC's were set up, less than ten per cent of Council decisions had significant inputs from the relevant SPC. Other issues remain to be resolved such as the amount of time available, lack of clarity about role, formal v. informal procedures, need to concentrate on strategic issues and feedback mechanisms to nominating bodies.

## HOLYHEAD ....

On arrival in Holyhead, we were entertained to lunch by representatives of the Holyhead Dun Laoghaire Link. This is an organisation formed by the Holyhead and District Chamber of Commerce and the Dun Laoghaire Business Association. Its purpose is to develop community, social and economic links between the two towns. The economic links go back a long time, as Holy Island has been known to trade with Ireland for four thousand years.

Jeff Evans, Secretary of the Holyhead Dun Laoghaire Link, welcomed us. He pointed out that although Holyhead is known to many Irish as a busy ferry port, the town has a number of interesting attractions and is a bustling shopping and visitors area in its own right and can be used as a centre for touring the island of Anglesey itself.

We also met the Deputy Mayor of Holyhead, Keith Thomas, local MP Albert Owen, Councillor Ann Kennedy and Jonathan Austin, Labour candidate for the Welsh Assembly.



**At its meeting on 16 November the Working Group formally endorsed its plans for the coming year.**

- ● ● **Develop capacity of Working Group and SPC members**

This is to ensure a continuity of understanding of the role of the Working Group and the Forum in general. Training will be provided as required.

- ● ● **Promote Volunteerism and good Citizenship**

The Working group will actively support the work of the newly formed Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Volunteer Steering Committee as per action B1.3.2. as outlined in the County Development Board Strategy Action Implementation Plan 2006 – 2008.

- ● ● **Network on Area basis**

It is proposed that a pilot area will be created by the end of February 2007 with two more to follow later in 2007 based on experience learned.

- ● ● **Continue development of our Website**

The website is receiving an average of 3,000 hits per month. The creation of links with other member group/organizations websites has been pivotal in promoting the website and we will continue with this work.

- ● ● **Expansion of the Community Forum Grant Scheme**

The grant scheme has been very successful in supporting and promoting our member groups and it is proposed that the scheme funding be increased to allow more groups to apply.

- ● ● **Sponsorship to promote inclusiveness across the County**

The Forum will sponsor events in the County promoting inclusiveness such as Summer Workshops for children from different social and ethnic backgrounds.

- ● ● **Work to support the actions of the CDB 2006-2008 SAIP Plan**

The Forum is the lead agency for action B1.3.2 (Develop mechanisms to support volunteers and organizations providing volunteering opportunities in the county). The Forum is also a supporting partner for a wide range of other actions in the plan.

- ● ● **Improve the linkages between Working Group, SPCs and other Groups**

Resulting from the Training Day, mechanisms will be put in place to enhance lines of communication between the Working Group and our elected members on the various SPCs and other committees.

- ● ● **Publish Newsletters on a quarterly basis**

This will continue the practice begun in 2006.

- ● ● **Increase the link with the National Community & Voluntary Forum**

We may seek to have a member of our Working Group on the national executive.

- ● ● **Promote networking between the Working Group and the Working Groups from the other Dublin based Councils**

The Working Group is looking at the possibility of holding a seminar with the other areas on best practice, items of mutual interest etc.

- ● ● **Survey of membership re. County Identity**

It is intended to carry out a survey of the membership to establish a community perspective as to County Identity.

- ● ● **Review of Forum's Aims and Objectives**

The review will help to develop policies which will enable the Working Group to deal with issues as they arise.

# DUN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN VOLUNTEERING PROJECT

**T**he **Community and Voluntary Forum** are the lead agency in promoting Volunteering in the County as included in the County Development Board, Strategy Action Implementation Plan 2006 - 2008.

The action as outlined in the plan, requires the Community and Voluntary Forum to establish a steering group, which will oversee implementation, employ a part time support worker, and develop a database on volunteering opportunities. Also, the Forum will establish a register of volunteers willing to give of their time and services in the County. A seminar will be held in 2007 to provide a context for the development of the plan and to allow local people to have some input.

The Working Group and Southside Partnership supported by the County Development Board made a joint application for Cohesion funding, which has allowed for the tasks to be achievable.

With the continued support of Southside Partnership, The Community Platform, Citizens Information Centres, Gardai, Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council Community Department and the Youth Services, a Steering Committee was formed. This committee is open for membership to any group/organisation who wishes to promote volunteerism in the County. The overall aim of this committee is the establishment of a one stop walk-in volunteer centre within the County, and affiliation to Volunteer Centres Ireland (a national umbrella organisation for the promotion and support of

volunteering centres in the country). This affiliation will give the Steering Committee access to training supports and use of its national database. To further its aims the Steering Committee advertised for and employed a Support Worker, due to start in the New Year.

An offshoot to the establishment of the Steering Committee has been the creation of links with UCD 'Volunteer at Home' project. This new project aims to encourage students to volunteer within the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County area. This project will be of advantage to the community and the students by creating the opportunity to match their skills and interests with the needs of community groups and organisations.

The Community and Voluntary Forum Working Group are delighted with the progress made to date, and are assured that with the help of the new Support Worker the action for which we have been tasked will soon reach fruition. The Working Group would like to thank Volunteer Centres Ireland for all the help and assistance given.

**Any group / organisation or individual who would like more information should contact:**

**Willie Morton Tel 205 4700 Ext. 3405 or e-mail [wmorton@dlrcoco.ie](mailto:wmorton@dlrcoco.ie)**



*Community Forum Chairperson Damien O'Sullivan, with Tony Coots, UCD Chaplain and members of the student committee for the promotion of 'Volunteering at Home' at the UCD Fresher Week 2006.*

# Peace of mind ensured this Christmas

## INCVF Insurance Scheme extends coverage for Christmas season

**A**s the Christmas season gets underway, BHP Insurances, the exclusive insurance broker to members of the Irish National Community and Voluntary Forum (INCVF), today announced that it has extended its cover for community and voluntary groups to include Christmas Lights, Christmas Parties, Drama and Musical Groups.

Public Liability cover is provided for under the insurance and these new categories can be catered for as stand-alone items or as an add on to an existing policy.

In March 2006 BHP and the INCVF launched a highly competitive insurance package designed to protect the specific risks of community and voluntary groups which has resulted in massive insurance savings for a range of organisations within these sectors.

Commenting on the announcement Mark Phelan, MD of BHP Insurance says:

*"Based on feedback from existing policy holders and demands from the INCVF coordinator we have been able to constantly tailor this package to provide for the needs of various groups. Christmas is a time for fun and celebration and we hope to ease any worries members may have when it comes to holding parties or staging dramas and musicals".*

INCVF members represent a diverse range of Community interests including Cultural/Heritage, Community Development, Sports/Recreation, Disability, Economic/Social and Youth Organisations. As well as the above, the BHP insurance package covers a wide range of other activities, from summer fetes and barbeques to meals on wheels and St. Patrick's Day parades.

The insurance package is underwritten by one of the largest insurers in the Irish market, Royal & Sun Alliance and the premium is uniquely guaranteed for two years. Quotes can be obtained in under 15 minutes and no proposal form needs to be filled out. Prices for cover start at €135.

The insurance package provides for a range of cover including public liability, employer's liability and property cover, all of which can be provided for under one policy. The core cover, public liability, is required by all community and voluntary organizations and includes a standard limit of €1.3m with the option to increase this to €2.6m or €6.5m.

A dedicated BHP Forum helpdesk and freephone number has been set up to deal with all enquiries on 1890 666 111.

### About the INCVF

*Established in November 2003, the Irish National Community and Voluntary Forum (INCVF) is the national representative body for community and voluntary organisation across the 26 counties of Ireland. It consists of 34 county and city Fora who have a combined membership of 22,000 community and voluntary groups. The County and City Forums were established as part of the County and City Development Board process to facilitate consultation with the Community and Voluntary sector.*

## BACK-YARD BURNING / BONFIRES

### Environment Warning

**T**his Halloween, a Resident Association in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown issued the following 'advice' to its' members:

**"Remember to leave waste out for the bonfire on the day – and not before."**

While well intended, this advice was misguided and wrong.

**The Burning of Waste – e.g. tyres, pallets and other wood, furniture, household, garden – is illegal whether on bonfires at Hallow'een or in your back garden / yard.**

**If you burn, or if you hand over waste for burning, you can be prosecuted and fined up to €3,000.**

**PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT - STOP THE BURNING NOW.**

*Issued by the Environmental Enforcement Unit of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.*

Additional information is available on the Council's web-site [www.dlrcoco.ie](http://www.dlrcoco.ie).

If you wish to report any incident of burning, please

Tel 01 204 7954 or

e-mail [wasteenforcement@dlrcoco.ie](mailto:wasteenforcement@dlrcoco.ie).



# Festival of World Cultures Summer School Project



In 2006, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Councils' Festival of World Cultures' initiated its first Summer School project as part of the overall Festival programme. The pilot project, made possible in part by the financial support of RAPID and the Community Forum, is a childrens development education programme. Its aim is to extend and enhance opportunities for young people from various Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown communities by providing an arts experience through a non-formal educational course.

This year 18 young people from Loughlinstown and Dundrum worked together for two weeks leading up to the Festival to create a dance theatre performance reflecting their views on the world as it *is* and as it *can be*. Combining dance, rhythm, drama and singing this piece evolved through a series of workshops and was devised specifically for the Festival.

Much to the delight of the audience "Summer Project Number 1!" was performed on the Peoples Park stage on the afternoon of Sunday 27 August. The performance was a hugely positive experience for all of the children who took part expanding both their personal confidence and overall vision of the world.

The Summer School project was facilitated by Community Artist Kathleen Yeates and Development Education Worker Yuvi Basanth in the Dundrum Recreation Centre, and would not have been possible without the dedication of Youth Group leaders Teresa Watters and Alison Bingham in addition to other community volunteers.

The Festival of World Cultures will further develop the Summer School project for their 2007 programme.

**Any participants / groups who are interested in the Summer School project 2007 can contact the Festival Office at [fwc@dlrcoco.ie](mailto:fwc@dlrcoco.ie). In addition, the Festival is also welcoming proposals for any Community Arts projects that may be suitable for our Festival programme.**

# Homelessness in Dun Laoghaire



**Liz Clifford**, Homeless Co-Ordinator for Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council tells us about a major new development for the homeless in Dun Laoghaire.

"Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has recently completed work on a new centre for people experiencing homelessness. This landmark development was designed by the Council's own architects. The purpose built building is located at Bentley Villas in central Dun Laoghaire and will

open in early December on a 24 / 7 basis. It comprises 13 apartments and a number of short stay emergency beds."

The Centre will replace the existing night and day services both of which were operating from temporary locations.

The service will be managed by Crosscare continuing the five year working relationship with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and the Health Services Executive in providing services for homeless people in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown.

The continued support from the residents, local business community and the gardai is paramount to the success of all homeless projects in the area."

The Centre will be officially opened in the new year and we hope to include a full report in our next edition.



# COULD YOU HELP A YOUNG PERSON IN NEED?



**T**he Social Work Team for Separated Child Seeking Asylum (SWTSCSA) is a team of Social Workers, Project Workers and Administrative staff whose role is to care for young people up to 17 years of age who have been brought into Ireland from other countries and do not have family to care for them.

These children come from a range of countries and cultures and can stay in the care of the Team, a part of the Health Service Executive (HSE) for anywhere from overnight to until they are old enough for independent living or to move into the care of other services.

Irrespective of the reason why a child is brought to Ireland, s/he is first and foremost a child and thus has the same need for care and protection as other children coming into the care of the HSE. In addition they will have other support needs, which could include:

- ◆ Grief and loss at being separated from what is familiar and known to them
- ◆ Psychological needs as a result of the traumatic events and/or persecution which has led to their being sent away to a place of safety
- ◆ Maintenance of their cultural identity, language and religious association
- ◆ Assistance with adjusting to a new community and way of life
- ◆ Support and assistance in seeking Asylum in Ireland.

While foster families would ideally come from similar backgrounds to the child placed in their care, this is not currently possible, due to the need and availability of foster carers

Where a child is placed with an Irish or mixed heritage family it is essential that these families are open to learning about a young person's cultural and social background and together with staff from the SWTSCSA, are prepared to assist the young person in whatever way possible to maintain a sense of cultural identity.

**Families are needed now to provide care on an emergency, short term and long-term basis for young children and vulnerable teenagers who need the warmth, safety and support of a family unit.**

Foster carers can be single, living together or married couples, with or without children, employed or unemployed. While we are open to enquiries

from all sectors of society in terms of cultural identity, language, sexuality and religion, most importantly we are looking for people who have a stable family life and are able to make the personal and time commitment to taking a child into their home.

While foster carers are ordinary people in that no formal qualifications are required, the necessity for them to open themselves and their lives to taking in a child and working co-operatively with the HSE in the child's best interests makes them exceptional people.

**Maybe you are one of these people?**

## Example of an Emergency Short Term Foster Placement

Taiwo is a 4 year old child who we think is from Nigeria. He arrived in Dublin Airport from London with a woman who was clearly not his mother. Immigration Officers immediately contacted the SWTSCSA. The next day another woman contacted the Team claiming to be Taiwo's real mother. Since she has no documentary evidence of being Taiwo's mother, before he can be placed with her, a DNA test is required to confirm whether they are related. Taiwo needs to stay with a caring foster family for six to eight weeks while these tests are being carried out. Taiwo is a healthy little boy who is a little frightened initially when meeting people. He needs to have weekly contact with the woman saying she is his mother. The contact will be supervised by a social worker.

## Example of a Longer Term Placement

Tola is a 16 year old girl from Somalia. Through an interpreter she said an uncle had helped her to leave Somalia when her family found out she was going out with a young man whom they didn't approve of. She said she was living in fear of female circumcision and the threat of a forced marriage to a much older man. Tola travelled overland via Ethiopia then flew to Dublin via France with an unknown white man. This man disappeared with her travel documents after dropping her off at the Department of Justice. Tola will be assisted to seek asylum in Ireland. She does not know any English and is very wary of people. She needs to be living in a supportive family environment where some of her trust in people can be rebuilt. She is a practising Moslem. Tola does not have any possessions with her.

Prospective Foster Carers undertake an assessment, which along with a number of home visits involving family and individual interviews also entails a medical, garda checks and follow up with personal referees. Assistance is given at all stages.

Approved Foster Carers receive preparatory and ongoing training, social work support and an attractive allowance to care for the child. Each child is also issued with a medical card and will have their own allocated social worker.

**If you are interested or would like more information please contact:**

**The Fostering Section  
Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14  
Tel 01 268 0361 / 268 0390 (Ask for Julie)**

# Making the Electoral Process Accessible to All

**E**very Irish citizen has a right to vote in elections in Ireland. An information booklet for Election 2007 is the outcome of a partnership initiative between Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Disability Consultation Group, St. John of God Carmona Services (Dun Laoghaire), and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. The booklet outlines the electoral process and gives relevant details for getting on the Register.

It is hoped that people with a disability and those who support them, such as carers, parents and disability service providers will use the information in the booklet to ensure that all citizens in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown constituencies get the opportunity to exercise their right to vote in the forthcoming general election.

You can download a copy from the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council website [www.dlrccoco.ie](http://www.dlrccoco.ie) under Quick Links - Voters Register (located on the left-hand side of the homepage).

Limited hard copies of the booklet are also available by contacting: [Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council](#), Community & Enterprise Department Tel 01 205 4700 Ext 3402

For further information on this project please contact: [Register of Electors](#)  
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Tel 01 205 4880

[Torry Schellhorn](#), Social Inclusion Officer, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Tel 01 204 7924

[Edel Kennedy](#), Rights Officer, St John of God Carmona Services, Dun Laoghaire Tel 01 284 9190 Ext 153

## What is Comhairle na nÓg?

Relaunched in January 2005, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Comhairle na nÓg is a platform for young people in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County to articulate and express their views on matters that affect them. It is comprised of representatives from various schools and youth clubs across the county. Effectively, it works to promote and establish the interests of young people throughout the county.

### Main aims of the Comhairle na nÓg

- 1 To establish and maintain a voice for young people of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown across a range of social, economic, cultural, political and other such matters of interest.
- 2 To keep the youth of this county informed and involved in the major decision-making processes affecting the county.
- 3 To promote an interest in politics and citizenship amongst young people of all ages and from all backgrounds throughout the county.

## MONKSTOWN RING ROAD | FINAL WORD?



At its 9 October meeting, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Councillors voted against a motion to instruct the County Manager not to proceed with this controversial development. The vote was 16 to 11.

The work is expected to start in late 2007 will be completed in about nine months.



We would like to hear from your organisation with a view to carrying details in forthcoming editions.

The Forum can be contacted at

**DUN LAOGHAIRE – RATHDOWN COMMUNITY FORUM**

C/o Community and Enterprise Department  
County Hall, Marine Road  
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Email: [ccf@dlrcoco.ie](mailto:ccf@dlrcoco.ie)

[www.dircommunityforum.ie](http://www.dircommunityforum.ie)