

# Heydon's HEADLINES

**ATHY AREA**

**FINE GAEL** 

**AUTUMN 2015**



**MARTIN  
HEYDON TD**

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## ATHY REGENERATION STRATEGY REVIEW

A new study on a regeneration strategy for Athy has been finalised and produced a number of recommendations to help to ensure the economic, physical and social regeneration of Athy. This project is being facilitated by the Athy Enterprise Co Ltd under the auspices of the Athy Enterprise Network. The members of AEN are Athy Lions Club, Athy Enterprise Co Ltd, Kildare Leader, Kildare County Council and Athy Chamber of Commerce.

In conjunction with Cllr Ivan Keatley I am working on a number of these issues and I look forward

to working with Athy Enterprise Network to bring many of these recommendations to fruition. With all groups working together, it should be possible to see progress that will improve conditions for residents and businesses alike.

As part of Fine Gael budget preparations I am working with a group of my back bench colleagues to develop a regeneration incentive programme for regional towns around Ireland which if implemented would complement many of the recommendations above.

The report was prepared by Shannon International Development Consultants.

### RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- Promote Athy Tourism around the "Ireland's Ancient East/Culturally Curious theme
- Investigate feasibility of developing a new Apprenticeship Centre in Athy
- Secure new uses for strategic sites Abbey, Carlton, Dominicans and Model School
- Review potential uses for vacant premises and maximise use of existing incentive schemes
- Focus new retail development around the town centre
- Provide new pedestrian footbridge over the River Barrow
- Review current signage on all approaches to the town
- Upgrade and Improve Athy website for investment purposes

## PROGRESS ON ATHY PRIMARY CARE CENTRE

I am continuing to follow up on plans for a Primary Health Care Centre in Athy. I have been advised by HSE Estates that progress is being made in seeking interested parties to run the centre. Final round bids were

received in mid September and it is expected that a final decision will be made very soon.

I am pushing to ensure that the new primary care centre would be at a town centre location and thus help further town development.

Primary Care centres are being rolled out across the Country and aim to provide all of the health and social care services that are required in a community in one central location, outside of a hospital environment.



## WEEKLY ADVICE CLINIC

**EVERY MONDAY FROM 5PM  
CHURCH OF IRELAND CENTRE  
CALL 045-487624 FOR APPOINTMENTS**

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# EXTRA SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES NEEDED IN ATHY

A strong case is being made to the Minister for Education to highlight future pressures on second level spaces in Athy. Athy Community College is almost at capacity with 398 pupils and future figures from Athy primary schools indicate strong future demand. This is in line with pressure for secondary school places in other parts of South Kildare as the school going population continues to grow. I am liaising with college principal Richard Daly regarding their future demands and I will provide all of the assistance that I can to ensure sufficient capacity is available for the years ahead. The college is a great resource to the town with many clubs and organisations using its sporting facilities, outside of school hours.



## PUSHING FOR REGENERATION SCHEME FOR RURAL TOWNS

Over the summer as part of our Standing up for Rural Ireland campaign myself and a number of my back bench colleagues have been pushing

for new initiatives to enhance and develop rural towns. A new scheme announced at the Ploughing which gives an allocation of €30m over

6 years to enhance towns is a step in the right direction but we will keep fighting for more.

"I would specifically like to see a grant scheme for town centre properties included in the Budget to encourage owners to develop these properties which may be in bad repair or derelict. Such development would help to re-vitalise town centres as well as creating some much needed additional living space and encouraging residents back to centre of towns.

Athy is a good example of a regional market town which would benefit from additional incentives for regeneration. I

welcome recent initiatives by Athy Lions Club to research options for such work and I believe Government proposals could enhance that. Towns like Athy, Kildare and Newbridge historically had much more residential accommodation in their centres, specifically above shops and business premises. As well as providing additional accommodation these residences ensured a living population in the centre of the town which boosted the trade for centre businesses and brought an energy to the centres even outside of business hours

There would be many benefits to such a scheme and I am continuing to fight for it.



*Pictured with Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Deputy Helen McEntee at the launch of our standing up for Rural Ireland Campaign.*

## NEW PREMISES FOR ATHY CIVIL DEFENCE AND ATHY ROWING & CANOE CLUB

Plans are in place to provide permanent shared accommodation for Athy Civil Defence and the growing Athy Rowing and Canoe Club in a premises on the Monasterevin Road. The new building would give Athy Civil Defence, who currently operate out of temporary accommodation at St. Vincents, a permanent home and immediate access to the river and allow them to expand their training facilities.

The premises will also allow Athy Rowing and Canoe club to expand from its 60 members and provide training for an increased membership to enjoy the sporting benefits of the River Barrow.

### Upcoming Events

- 15th Shackleton Autumn School on Friday 23rd October - Monday 26th October 2015
- Shackletons Endurance - Musical Suite - Sunday Oct 25th Dominican Church

**MORE INFORMATION FROM  
ATHY HERITAGE CENTRE MUSEUM**

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# ATHY SOUTHERN DISTRIBUTOR ROUTE FUNDING CONFIRMED IN CAPITAL PLAN

The inclusion of the Athy Southern Distributor Route in the Capital Plan announced this week re-affirms the Government's commitment to this project and the confirmation of funding to completion announced last year.

Unlike the M7 road widening project, the Athy road does not yet have planning permission. Last year's funding confirmation allowed Kildare County Council (KCC) to take this project off the shelf and prepare a planning application for An Bord Pleanála. The project was stalled before that commitment of funding was announced last year.

Once funding was confirmed by Government, KCC had the go ahead to proceed with the road. Since that time, Clodagh Lyons has been appointed as the Council's dedicated project engineer on the project with ROD/AECOM appointed as consultant engineers. They have updated previous traffic surveys, and are now preparing a new traffic model and updated environmental impact statement with a focus on getting a planning application published and lodged as soon as possible. The ball is now firmly in KCC's court to deliver this road to planning and construction as soon as possible. There is no impediment from Government for its delivery. It is up to the elected Councillors of the Athy Municipal District and us as Oireachtas members to now hold KCC to account on the progress of this road.

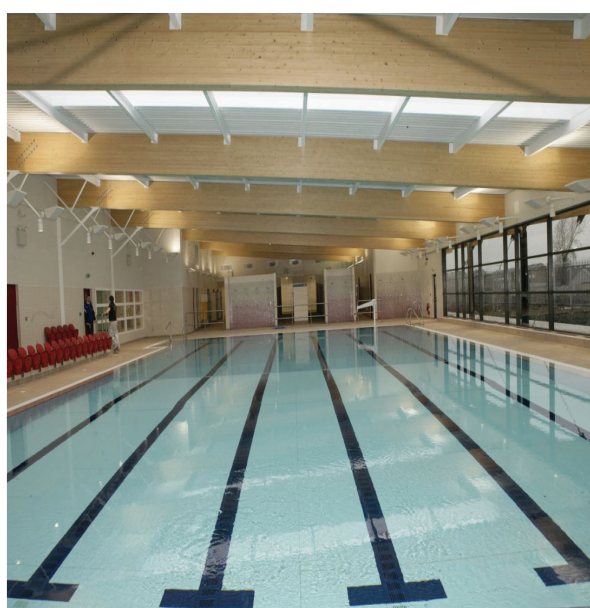


## €300,000 GRANT FOR ATHY SWIMMING POOL

The announcement by Minister of State for Tourism and Sport Michael Ring T.D. of a grant of €300,000 towards the K Leisure swimming pool in Athy was very welcome news.

The swimming pool in Athy is an important facility and is used extensively by both young and old. This funding will help to improve the energy efficiency of the pools and enhance the disabled access. It will enable K Leisure who run the pool to reduce their energy costs and improve the facilities for all users, including disabled users of the pools.

Of 16 swimming pools nationally which received funding, 2 are in the Kildare and 1 in Athy.



## PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED FOR SCOIL MHICIL NAOFA

I was delighted at the recent grant of planning permission for an extension for Scoil Mhicil Naofa having worked with principal Moira Liddane, Board of Management and local residents to address concerns regarding access and traffic. The 2 storey extension will replace the many unsuitable prefabs in use for years and provide up to 17 classrooms with a hall, library and other accommodation facilities.



*I'm pictured with pupils from Scoil Mhicil Naofa on a recent tour of Leinster House.*

## PLANNING SUBMITTED FOR PARISH PASTORAL CENTRE

I welcome the submission of planning permission for a new pastoral parish centre at the site of the old Carlton Abbey Hotel Leisure Centre at Rathstewart. It will be great to have development at this site and facilitate use by the parish community of a new premises. I wish Fr. Tanham well in his move to Howth and look forward to working with new parish priest Fr Frank McEvoy on the project as it continues.

## TALKS ONGOING RE DOMINICANS SITE

I like many people in Athy will be very sorry to see the Dominicans depart in November after their long and proud history of service in Athy. I believe Kildare County Council could best utilise the site for community gain while also providing a lasting legacy to the Dominicans contribution to Athy. I am hopeful that such a scenario could transpire subject to ongoing negotiations between both the council and the Dominican fathers.





Photo with Margaret at Heritage Centre

## ATHY HERITAGE CENTRE MUSEUM

A grant of €10,000 was recently confirmed by Minister for Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphries for the Athy Heritage Centre Museum under the Local and Regional Museums Scheme.

As Chairman of the Friends of Athy Heritage Centre I am delighted that this grant, one of the highest in the Country, has been awarded to Athy. The grant is for the purchase of Touch Screen Multi Media Kiosks which will enhance the visitor experience at the Athy Heritage Centre Museum and help them to attract more visitors. Athy and it's surrounds are rich in heritage and the Museum is a great resource for showcasing the history of the area. I would like to compliment Margaret and her staff at the Heritage Centre Museum for their hard work and dedication to the development of the centre. This grant is a great boost to their work.

**I am now on snapchat as well as facebook and twitter. Follow me at username martinheydon to keep up to date with my activites.**



## RECENT TRIP TO LOURDES WITH CURRAGH MILITARY

I recently visited Lourdes with the Curragh Group as part of the Annual Military Pilgrimage. Great credit is due to the Curragh Lourdes Fund Committee for their tireless fundraising that makes this trip possible for local sick children and adults. I also saw at first hand the high esteem that our defence force personnel are held in by their international counterparts.



## OPENING OF SKATE PARK

It is great to see the skate park up and running and in use by young people in the town. I am pictured at the official opening with Cllr Ivan Keatley.



### WORKING WITH CLLR IVAN KEATLEY IN THE ATHY AREA

Cllr Ivan Keatley is available for advice and assistance on all Council matters affecting the Athy area. He can be contacted at 087-2731335 or by email at [ivankeatley@gmail.com](mailto:ivankeatley@gmail.com)

### LOCAL ATHY CLINIC – EVERY MONDAY FROM 5PM

Church of Ireland Centre, Carlow Road  
**EVERY MONDAY FROM 5PM**  
Call 045-487624 for appointments

0612

## MARTIN HEYDON TD

Chairperson, Fine Gael Committee on Agriculture

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