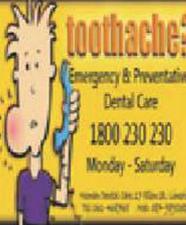


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EMMETT O'BRIEN



MAURICE QUINLIVAN



TOM NEVILLE

THE LIKELY LADS

by Bernie English
bernie@limerickpost.ie

BOOKIES are tipping that there will be three new TDs in Limerick by the weekend, with odds-on Independent candidate Emmet O'Brien, Fine Gael's Tom Neville and Sinn Fein's Maurice Quinlivan, in the city, named as those most likely to succeed.

Also giving the sitting TDs a run for their money in the city constituency, according to the latest odds from Paddy Power's bookmakers, will be Anti Austerity Alliance candidate, Cian Prendiville.

With many pundits predicting that Jan O'Sullivan could be in trouble with an electoral bite back against the Labour Party, Fianna Fail frontrunner Willie O'Dea said in a statement issued to the Limerick Post on Wednesday, that contrary to various media reports, he had not asked his supporters to give their second preference vote to the Education Minister.

"My position has always been that the second preference vote is a matter for each individual voter," he added.

In the Limerick city constituency, the bookies are predicting that Finance Minister Michael Noonan will top the poll again, with

odds of 1/100 to win a seat. His running mate Kieran O'Donnell (FG) is less of a sure bet, having drifted from 2/7 to 4/9.

Long-time Limerick representative, Willie O'Dea (FF) seems set to return to the Dáil with odds on him offered at 1/100.

Labour's Jan O'Sullivan has drifted from 4/7 to 4/5.

The biggest changes have been Cian Prendiville (AAA) who has been backed in from 40/1 to 7/1 to pick up a seat and Sarah Jane Hennelly (SD) who has been backed in from 50/1 to 14/1.

In Limerick county, Emmet O'Brien (Ind)

has been backed from 11/4 in early January to 1/4 now.

The Fine Gael colleagues Tom Neville and Patrick O'Donovan have remained solid at 4/9 and 2/7 respectively having opened up at much shorter prices.

Niall Collins (FF) was always unbackable at 1/50 and has remained consistent at this price.

Independent Richard O'Donoghue has been cut from 80/1 to 25/1 while there has been brisk betting on Social Democrat Senator James Heffernan whose price has been cut from 10/1 to 5/1.

PADDY'S WEEKEND

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A good week for jobs in Limerick

by Daragh Frawley

THERE was good news on the employment front in Limerick last week with 230 new jobs promised from the establishment of a smokeless fuel manufacturing plant in Foynes and the expansion of a Castletroy-based software company.

Bord na Móna secured planning permission from Limerick City and County Council for the construction of a smokeless fuel plant in the port of Foynes which will support 140 jobs during the construction phase and 60 jobs when the facility is fully operational.

Meanwhile, software company Kneat Solutions Ltd, has entered into an agreement with a Canadian company that will involve an initial investment of €5.5 million and the creation of 30 new jobs at its Castletroy headquarters.

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EDITORIAL **Post**

AIRPORT

Dublin aiming to ground Shannon with media blitz

by **Bernie English**
bernie@limerickpost.ie

A MEDIA advertising blitz by the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) aimed at the Mid West region has been branded as a cynical attempt to lure passengers away from using Shannon.

Clare Fine Gael TD Joe Carey, who campaigned for Shannon's independence from the DAA, said the advertising campaign targeting passengers from the Mid-West reflects the "clear intention of the DAA to monopolise air travel. This would be hugely detrimental for balanced regional development".

Deputy Carey said that analysis carried out by him of the local media advertising campaign suggests that the DAA is engaged in an onslaught concentrated on Clare, Limerick and Galway in a

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In the last month alone, the spending by Dublin Airport on media in the Shannon catchment would be well in excess of €150,000.

DEPUTY JOE CAREY



Joe Carey at Shannon Airport
Photo: Yvonne Vaughan

deliberate attempt to lure passengers to Dublin from across the Mid West region.

"When is enough enough for the DAA?", he asked, as he urged the public to show its support for the local airport by flying Shannon.

"In the last month alone, the spending by Dublin Airport on media in the Shannon catchment, according to rate cards, would be well in excess of €150,000. They have taken one

and two page adverts, amounting to a bonanza for local media in Clare, Tipperary and Galway and have put foreign holidays up for grabs on local radio. From my research, there was no comparable spend by them anywhere else in the country.

"What really strikes here is the scale of the campaign. It is unprecedented from what I can see and certainly is not focussed on any other part of the country".

"I don't begrudge local media

this valuable income but that is the only plus out of this. Otherwise it clearly points to one thing and that is that Dublin Airport is intent on eating every other airport up, starting with Shannon. If anything this absolutely reaffirms that Government policy to make Shannon independent was correct as it would have been wound down by stealth otherwise".

After being contacted by the Limerick Post, the DAA declined to comment.

COURT REPORT

Dolores to pay €6,000 over air rage incident

by **Andrew Carey**

CRANBERRIES lead singer Dolores O'Riordan has been ordered to pay €6,000 to the court poor box after a judge said it would be unfair to leave her with a criminal conviction over an air rage incident on a flight from New York to Shannon.

Ms O'Riordan (44) of Friarstown, Kilmallock admitted three counts of assault and another charge relating to the obstruction a garda at Shannon Airport on November 10, 2014.

Evidence had been heard in the case that the Limerick singer became unruly during the New York to Shannon flight. She assaulted two members of the airport police before she headbutted and spat at a garda who she falsely claimed had sexually assaulted her.

She was arrested and later found singing in the custody cells proclaiming that she was the "Queen of Limerick".

She was described as being in a hypomanic state at the time of the incident and could not be held responsible for her actions.

Judge Patrick Durcan said he was satisfied that Ms O'Riordan was suffering from a mental illness which inhibited her judgement.

She was ordered to pay €6,000 into the court poor box within the week.

ELECTION

Victims of crime must be recognised

by **Andrew Carey**

VICTIMS of crime need to be fully supported with a shift in the "balance in favour of criminals and repeat offenders".

That's the view Fianna Fail Justice spokesman Niall Collins who says that while ordinary people fall prey to criminality, they are left unrecognised in the system".

"If Fianna Fáil is in government, criminals convicted of an offence will be expected to pay a new victim's surcharge. This is a charge to be paid by an offender after they have pleaded guilty or been convicted. The amount depends on their circumstances and the sentence passed. It will be separate from any fine or other court charge.

"The fees from this surcharge will be ring-fenced for a fund to finance victim's support groups. When a court passes a sentence, it must also order that the relevant surcharge is paid.

"We also proposed to set up a Sentencing Commission to reform the area of criminal sentencing, improve consistency and work to enhance public confidence. This will be based on legislation that I published in 2013.

COURT REPORT

Damages award for boy in two crashes

by **Andrew Carey**

A TEN-year-old boy who suffered the trauma of two car crashes within the space of two months has been awarded more than €60,000 damages at the High Court in Limerick last week.

In November 2011, when he was six years old, the boy was involved in a road traffic collision when the car he was travelling in with his parents was rear-ended.

SOCIETY

Huge demand for housing as family homelessness soars in Limerick

by **Alan Jacques**
alan@limerickpost.ie

NOVAS Initiatives is currently working with 50 families in Limerick City who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The voluntary agency has revealed that its Family Support Service in the city continues to accept referrals at unprecedented levels. The service, which has a capacity of 40 families per month, is currently supporting 50 families in the city.

According to manager of Novas' Family Support Service, Grainne Madigan, it is now operating at 25 per cent above capacity. This, she said, is placing immense pressure on the service.

"Despite the increase there are still 25 families on a waiting list who are in immediate need of a service," she told the Limerick Post.

"Family homelessness is due to a

number of issues including a lack of rented property in the private-rented market and insufficient rent supplements, which do not reflect market rent," she added.

Novas' communications manager Una Burns explained that when rented homes are repossessed by banks and families are subsequently

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Despite the increase there are still 25 families on a waiting list who are in immediate need of a service.

GRAINNE MADIGAN

forced to leave, they find it increasingly difficult to secure a new property within current rent supplement limits.

"The extent of family homelessness is even greater than the official figures reveal due to the extent of 'hidden homeless', where families are staying with relatives and friends on a temporary basis following tenancy breakdown. These arrangements can break down very quickly and families can find themselves immediately homeless," Ms Burns explained.

Novas, which also operate an out-of-hours service, supporting people who find themselves unexpectedly homeless, noted that eight families presented through this channel last month, indicating the sudden nature of their homeless situation. A further 117 single adults also presented to the out-of-hours service during January.

Novas are tackling the problem through a number of means.

"Last year we purchased eight houses for homeless families in the city in collaboration with the JP McManus Benevolent Fund and the local authority. In addition to this we are currently operating a Housing First service with Limerick's Homeless Action Team to move homeless people directly into independent accommodation.

"However, a broader response is required. The next government, whoever that maybe, must prioritise housing post-election by immediately increasing rent supplement levels, commencing a social housing building programme in the region of 40,000 homes over the next five years and fully enforcing Part V of the Planning and Development Act to include social and affordable housing in all new developments," Ms Burns concluded.



Student William Reynolds from Colaiste Ide agus Iosef, Co Limerick during a mock trial at Green Street Courthouse as part of The Bar of Ireland's Transition Year Programme. Photo Conor McCabe



For a water-related emergency, dial **999** or **112** and ask for the Coastguard

Farm thefts

GARDAÍ are investigating a number of thefts from farms in county Limerick where high value items were stolen. A maroon and white coloured double-axle horsebox was stolen from a farmyard at Parkmore, Shanagolden between midnight on Sunday and Tuesday morning last. A hoof pairing crate, described a specialist and expensive piece of agricultural machinery, was stolen from a farm at Gortnadroma in Shanagolden last Friday. Overnight on Thursday/Friday last, 300 litres of diesel fuel were stolen from a farm at Ballypierce in Newcastle West while on Wednesday, two horse rugs were stolen from horses grazing on lands at Mainistir, Croom. Anyone with information should contact Newcastle West Gardaí on 069 20650 or 1800 666 111.

Health hub

THE UNIVERSITY of Limerick has applied for planning permission for the development of a health hub at the old town hall on Rutland Street. The application is part of UL's five-year strategy and the university has also declared its intention to provide student accommodation in the Opera Centre. Launching the university's 'Broadening Horizons' strategy, UL president, Prof Don Barry said the university is anxious to see developments in the Opera Centre happening as soon as possible. "What I want to see is hundreds of students, studying, living and bringing their energy and their life to the city as part of its continuing revitalisation, which I believe is a vital part of the Limerick 2030 plan".

Legal aid

TWO Limerick brothers charged in connection with a €50,000 heroin haul at a house in St Mary's Park have been granted free legal aid. Brian Collopy (43) of Killonan, Ballysimon and Kieran Collopy (40) of St Ita's Street, St Mary's Park are charged with possession of heroin for sale or supply on December 15. There had been a Garda objection to Kieran Collopy being granted free legal aid on the basis that he "traveled abroad frequently and had access to substantial means". However, after both men submitted statements of means, legal aid was granted and the case adjourned to March 8 for service of the book of evidence. Both men were remanded in continuing custody to that date.

STAR award

THE Soundscape Project, a National Learning Network rehabilitative programme based in Limerick, has won a prestigious STAR Award, as the Munster winner in the category for large organisations. The project enabled learners with additional support-needs to become 'citizen collectors' of Limerick city sounds as part of a sonic-mapping project. Learners were able to access information technology and sound recording training at the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College to capture aspects of urban soundscapes. Organised by AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation, as part of its annual Adult Learners' Festival, the awards recognise outstanding work in adult education.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

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