

# BLESSINGTON

## NEWSLETTER

Easter 2006

**GREEN  
PARTY**  
Comhaontas Glas



Cllr. Deirdre de Búrca

[www.deirdredeburca.com](http://www.deirdredeburca.com)



Cllr. Deirdre de Burca, Green Party, Chairperson Bray Town Council, Wicklow County Councillor and Green Party General Election candidate for Co. Wicklow.

**Dear Resident,**

The Green Party is delivering this Easter newsletter to you to bring you up to date on some of the things that are happening in Blessington at the moment.

## Councillors vote for Blessington Drinking Water Supply next to illegal dumps!

At a meeting of Wicklow County Council on Monday 20th March, councillors voted to put a new drinking water supply for Blessington in a disused quarry on Roadstone's land. This was a very bad decision and was not in the public interest. Firstly, there are a number of legal complications attached to the site. It is a disused quarry at Glen Ding where Roadstone illegally quarried over 60,000 tonnes of material from the site. The High Court ruled that Roadstone should reinstate the site within 6 months of a Blessington Local Area Plan being adopted by Wicklow County Council. Not surprisingly, no Local Area Plan has been adopted by the council for the village since that court ruling. Now Wicklow County Council plans to buy that site from Roadstone, despite the fact that there is a serious financial liability attached to it. Wicklow County Council says that it will apply to the High Court to try to have the ruling on the site changed, but this is far from certain.

Much more serious however, is the fact councillors voted to put Blessington's new water reservoir on this disused quarry which is next to a number of very large toxic illegal dumps. These illegal dumps on Roadstone's land were found several years ago and some of them have not even been properly investigated yet. The consultants hired by Wicklow County Council admitted that they were not told that the illegal dumps were there when they chose the disused quarry as the most suitable site for a water reservoir. The consultants also were not aware of a letter to Roadstone from Wicklow County Council's Director of Environmental Services, Michael Nicholson, in October 2003 telling the company that the groundwater underneath its land at Glen Ding was contaminated with a number of heavy metals, some of which could be 'carcinogenic' or 'cancer-causing'.

### Department of the Environment has serious concerns

15 out of the 18 councillors present at the meeting of March 20th voted to support the drinking water reservoir going ahead next to the illegal dumps, despite the fact that there were two other clean sites available which were free from any controversy. This included the Fianna Fail, Fianna Gael, Labour and Independent councillors present, including local councillors Jim Ruttle (Ind) and Edward Timmins (FG). These same councillors had received a letter from the Department of the Environment late last year expressing strong concerns about the suitability of the Glen Ding site for a water reservoir and suggesting that one of two other available sites be chosen. At the meeting on Monday 20th March Councillor Tommy Cullen (Ind) put forward a proposal at the meeting that the council would put the new water reservoir on a greenfield site in Newtownpark, one of the other two sites that was available. Cllr Deirdre de Burca (Green Party) seconded this proposal. However, 15 other councillors voted against this proposal with one councillor abstaining.

### Contact

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# Decisions that favour Roadstone at the expense of the public

Once again Wicklow County Council has shown its willingness to make decisions that are in the interests of the Roadstone company, even if this is at the expense of the residents of Blessington. The Green Party believes that there is no other country in the European Union in which a new drinking water supply for an area would be placed next to unexamined illegal dumps, especially when there were a number of other clean and suitable sites available. The decision that Wicklow County Councillors have made is an insult to the people of Blessington who deserve a clean, safe drinking water supply that is free from risk or controversy.

## Blessington Residents campaign against water resevoir next to illegal dumps

Up to 1,000 residents of Blessington recently signed a petition objecting to the location of the water resevoir next to the illegal dumps at Glen Ding. This petition will be delivered to the Minister for the Environment for his attention. Only Minister Dick Roche now has the power to prevent this bad decision from being implemented. As the Department of the Environment is providing much of the funding for the proposed resevoir, Minister Roche can refuse to support the funding of the Glen Ding site. Public pressure can and does make a difference. The Green Party is very sure that all the public campaigning opposing the landfill on Roadstone's land actually influenced the eventual decision by the EPA to refuse the waste licence for the landfill. We would encourage you to write to, e mail or ring the Minister's office stating your opposition to putting the drinking water supply for Blessington on the Glen Ding site next to the illegal dumps. You, and your children, deserve better!



Ciaran Cuffe TD, Cllr. Deirdre De Burca and John Gormley TD at Blessington Reservoir.

## Town Relief Road:

The legal problems preventing the use of the partially completed Blessington Relief Road are unacceptable and the County Council must move to resolve them immediately. This action alone, however, will not solve the dangerous and time-consuming traffic congestion in, and around the village. The Green Party now calls on Wicklow County Council to give a firm date for the completion of the entire Blessington Relief Road and to give the village, and its residents, relief from the pressure of the daily convoys of trucks and cars passing through it.

## Gardai

Blessington is a rapidly expanding town. The Green Party is insisting that the Garda services provided match this expansion. We call on the Minister for Justice to allocate more Garda resources to Blessington by opening up the Garda Station 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and putting more Gardai on the beat where they can properly interact with the local community. There is no point telling Blessington residents that the Garda resources are there if 'there' means Baltinglass or Naas.

## New Library in Blessington

The Green Party welcomes the opening of the new 4000 sq ft library in Blessington, which we understand will take place in September or October 2006. Congratulations to all concerned for bringing this project to fruition!

## New Tidy Towns Committee formed

A new Tidy Towns Committee has been formed in Blessington. The committee held a meeting on Monday 20th March in the Community Centre to which all councillors were invited. Cllr Deirdre de Burca attended on behalf of the Green Party and congratulated the committee on its work to date. An Annual Spring Clean day is being organised by the committee on April 22nd. For further information watch out for posters and notices around Blessington advertising the clean-up.

## Get Active

Join my **Information Network** and keep in touch. Phone, email, or fill in the form and send it back to 16/17 Suffolk Street, Dublin 2, or email your issues to [deburcad@gofree.indigo.ie](mailto:deburcad@gofree.indigo.ie)

[www.deirdreburca.com](http://www.deirdreburca.com)

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