

Grant puts Ennis on its bike

Jessica Quinn

ENNIS is set to ride on, with €650,000 in funding for the development of improved cycling facilities. The grant is being allocated to develop cycle lanes, bike parking, road and junction improvements, information signs and awareness-raising projects in Ennis.

The project is part of the National Cycle Policy Framework and Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future, the main aim being to make it easier, safer and more accessible to cycle in Ennis.

The funding will be spent in Ennis on improving junctions; creating three new town cycling zones, with maximum speeds of 30 km/hr, giving more priority to the cyclist; three new cycle routes; cycle parking spots and new signs giving cycling times and distances on the main routes of the town. Some of the fund will also be spent on improving awareness of the new facilities.

Employers with over 200 employees will get to be involved in the Smarter Travel Workplaces scheme and all schools in the Ennis area will get support and coaching to get children involved in the Green Flag programme.

Three routes have been chosen for cycle lanes. The Tulla Road to Gort RD R352 route will connect the big housing estates on the Tulla Road with the big

employers on the Gort Road. It will also connect these places to the Fair Green and Ennis Leisure Centre. The Quin Road R469 route will connect the public transport links in Ennis with the town and the town centre with the Quin Road Business Park. Finally, the Clarecastle to the town and open up a safe route to Ballymally route will connect Clarecastle to the town and open up a safe route to Ballyalla Lake for families. It will also be a major part of the National Cycle Network, connecting Ennis with Lahinch.

The grant was announced under the Active Travel Towns Programme by Minister of State for Transport, Alan Kelly TD, this week. Labour election candidate for the Ennis area, Seamus Ryan commented, "It's great to see Ennis developing a much more joined-up cycling network around our town, instead of the 5km that exists at the moment. There is the potential to triple that to 15km, connecting the places where people live and work with the amenities of the town."

"There was a start made on putting a decent network in place with the existing 5km of lanes, the tunnel under the bridge on the Tulla Road and the new cycle/pedestrian bridge on the Quin Road but they were just not connected to each other or to places people wanted to go on a daily basis."

"Every day in De Valera Library, I meet people who would love to cycle to

and from work or the shops or to school with their children but are too afraid, for their and their children's safety on our roads. The few strips of lanes in existence are mostly ignored by motorists for their lack of use and are seen as convenient spaces for overtaking cars at junctions.

"This major upgrade to the cycling facilities, due to start in June and be completed in 18 months, will bring cycling into the heart of Ennis life, making pedalling to and from work, school, the shops, the gym or for a swim a much more realistic prospect and make it impossible for motorists to ignore their existence."

He concluded, "The benefits of a safer network to travel to and from schools, libraries and the other great facilities Ennis has to offer does not stop at the residents of Ennis and Clarecastle. With the completion of this project, Ennis will have the beginnings of a real cycle network that will make it a great stopping point on the National Cycle Network and on the Wild Atlantic Way, making it a major focus point where people will want to stop and stay, spending their money in the local economy, something which will ultimately be of benefit to all the residents of Clare, keeping our county town as a vibrant and active commercial centre where we can all get good services and not just a dormitory town for Limerick and Galway."

€350,000 spending spree for Kiltrush

KILRUSH Town Council has been given the go-ahead, by the Department of Environment and Local Government, to spend €350,000 from the council's capital resources on upgrading Cappa playground and developing an astro turf pitch on the Coraclare Road in the town.

The funds had been set aside by Kiltrush Town Council throughout the years and had been earmarked for various projects. However, to get approval to spend the money on the playground and astro turf projects, the council had to apply to the department to obtain permission.

"The money will go towards the development of the first phase of the astro turf pitch. The project was tendered last year and a local contractor is lined up with the hope to start the works immediately," Councillor Ian Lynch said.

He said the availability of the money for the upgrade of Cappa playground was also a significant boost.

"A committee was formed in 2010, along with development plans to upgrade the playground at Cappa but funding was not available. I have campaigned for this development and have drawn up several layouts, plans and tenders. The works were tendered and are in the process of being reviewed with the intention to start immediately. Hopefully, the playground will be open by early summer," he added, before noting that some projects had failed to secure funding.

"I acknowledge that several representations have been made by groups, highlighting very worthy projects. Unfortunately, the spending of capital funds can only be undertaken on council projects and this decision rests with the Department of Environment and Local Government," the Independent local election candidate concluded.

Gardaí investigate thefts

GARDAÍ in Sixmilebridge and Kiltrush are investigating two separate thefts of fertiliser.

Twelve 50kg bags of fertiliser were stolen between 7.05pm on Sunday, March 30 and 11am on Monday, March 31, from a farmyard in Belvoir, Sixmilebridge.

Separately, between 1pm on Friday, March 28 and 2pm on Wednesday, April 2, 30 bags of fertiliser were stolen from a farm in Ballynate West, Kiltrush.

Elsewhere, chainsaws and a strimmer were

stolen from sheds in East Clare last weekend.

The burglary occurred between 9pm on Friday, April 4 and 1am on Saturday, April 5, when two sheds were broken into in Gortavulla, Caher. The culprit(s) forced open the front doors and made off with two red and white Stihl chainsaws and a red and grey petrol hedge-trimmer.

Anyone who can assist gardaí with their enquiries is asked to contact their local garda station.

Global rebranding for Quin man's firm

HLB International, one of the leading global accountancy networks, has recently signed a new member in Ireland, HLB McKeogh Gallagher Ryan, based in Limerick.

Established in 2012 by Mary McKeogh, Eoin Ryan and Quin man Eoin Gallagher, the newly rebranded HLB McKeogh Gallagher Ryan, formerly McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants, is a full-service firm offering audit, accounting, tax, business advisory and corporate recovery services.

Speaking at the launch, HLB McKeogh Gallagher Ryan's managing partner, Mary McKeogh, described the venture as a very exciting development.

"The Limerick business community has been hit hard by the downturn but we do seem to be turning a corner. We are definitely seeing more movement in the economy and improvements in our clients' position. These are then mirrored in our business - when our clients are doing business, we're doing business. Joining HLB means our firm now has the scope and resources to expand our service offering and work on large international assignments," she said.

HLB McKeogh Gallagher Ryan's audit and accounting partner, Eoin Gallagher from Quin, pointed out that, even though they are only two years in business, they have expanded quickly and now employ 30 people. "Our membership of HLB now gives an extra international dimension



Mary McKeogh, Eoin Ryan and Quin man Eoin Gallagher of HLB McKeogh Gallagher Ryan.

to our services and we expect it will directly impact on the kind of clients we attract and our staff levels. We would expect to create a further 10 jobs here in the Mid-West over the next two years. As a training firm, we are committed to hiring, training and retaining the best and brightest graduates from the region's third-level institutions and will be expanding our graduate programme this year and in

2015 to meet this demand," he said.

Rob Tautges, chief executive of HLB International, said they were delighted to add HLB McKeogh Gallagher Ryan to their Irish federation. "This broadens our geographic coverage in Ireland. As a progressive multi-disciplinary practice, HLB McKeogh Gallagher Ryan complements and strengthens the services HLB members currently offer," he stated.

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