

New flood prevention strategy being drawn up for county

By TONY GALVIN

A MAJOR flood risk map outlining Co. Galway’s flooding flash points is to be drawn up using data collected during and after the recent floods which caught all agencies involved in this area off guard.

Members of Galway Co. Council were told at a meeting in County Hall on Monday that the map would be part of a new co-operation policy between agencies and a newly formed flood working group had already met three times to begin identifying a schedule of work that needs to be carried out to try and prevent a recurrence of the recent disastrous floods.

County Manager Martina Maloney stated that there were “fairly elaborate proposals” being prepared for dealing with potential flood risk along the Clare River catchment area. This is expected to involve drainage work, some bridge work and clearing of tributaries and drains along the course of the river.

‘Fairly elaborate proposals’ are being prepared

Similar plans are being drawn up throughout the county. However, she pointed out that there were still major areas of the county where no agency had responsibility for waterways or flooding.

The Co. Council looks after drainage districts while the OPW only took responsibility for waterways they have worked on.

The hope is to have a comprehensive map of the county outlining all the flood risk areas which can be referred to in the future and used to plan a strategy of flood defences and remedial work.

The Manager told a meeting of Galway Co. Council on Monday that the OPW and the council were working in tandem on a flooding strategy which included the drawing up of a flood map of the county highlighting all the most at-risk areas.

She said they had identi-

rain that fell that caused problems.

Even with the benefit of local knowledge some householders had built in areas where they never expected to be impacted on by flooding and were taken by surprise when it happened, just as the Co. Council had been in many cases.

The Department of the Environment were now issuing new guidelines in relation to planning in at-risk areas and planners would be consulting these in future when risk needed to be assessed.

However, the Manager did say that anyone building a home needed to check for themselves what the risks might be and not rely on being informed by an agency such as the planning authority or the OPW.

People should satisfy themselves as to the suitability of a site before they applied for planning permission and ensure that the site is suitable for building on.

The suggestion that raised foundation platforms be insisted on as a planning con-



THE MAUSOLEUM at Monivea is the last resting place of Kathleen ffrench, whose exciting life story is told in a new book 'An Irish Woman in Czarist Russia'. The book, by Jean Lombard will be launched in the village on Sunday afternoon, February 7. The mausoleum will be open to the public earlier that afternoon. See also Omnibus on Page 10. HERALD PHOTO

Drinking late bad enough, but smoking in pub terrible altogether, says Judge

TUAM must be a great town to live in when you can go smoking and drinking and carousing until the early hours of the morning, Judge Geoffrey Browne said at the local Court this week when he fined two publicans for after-hours offences.

Before the Court was Cllr Mary Loftus, member of Tuam Town Council, who pleaded guilty to serving drink at 5.30 am. Karen Hughes solr (defending) said her client was apologetic for her lapse.

Garda Sharon Murray told of entering the Hibernia Inn on High Street with a colleague at 5.30 am on June 6 and of them having to make their way through a haze of cigarette smoke.

There was evidence of fresh drinks on the premises but no sigh of drinkers until the Gardai found 10 individuals out in the yard.

Judge Browne said they certainly liked to drink a bit late in Tuam and it was bad enough to find people drinking in a pub at this hour but he was shocked altogether to hear they were smoking as well.

“Ms Loftus, what on earth are you doing allowing people to smoke in your pub,” the Judge asked. “Mea culpa,” replied the defendant.

Judge Brown asked her how was business and she told him it was “average”.

On being told the defendant had a previous conviction for a similar offence he imposing a fine of €250 and told her not to do it again.

Also charged with after-hours offences was Martin Geoghegan of Geoghegan’s High Street.

The Court was told Garda received a complaint when music was heard coming from the premises at a late hour on June 1 last.

When Garda entered the pub at 4.50 am they found eight people there having a drink.

Danny McGrath solr (defending) explained that the proprietor and his wife along with members of their immediate family and three bar staff made up the eight found ones.

The music which drew attention to them was from the bar jukebox and there was no question of any money changing hands for the drink.

Judge Browne said if it wasn’t for the music they’d have got away with it. He didn’t know if they were drinking a bit late or a bit early but it didn’t strike him as a commercial transaction and asked Supt Marie Skehill what she thought.

Supt Skehill said that as Geoghegan’s had not come to Garda attention before for similar offences she thought the explanation offered by the defence sounded reasonable enough. The Probation Act was applied.



AT THE Kingfisher Club Open Day in Tuam recently were Mary Connolly of the Kingfisher Club with new members Laura Laffey and Martina Morgan.

How to get the best from a medical appointment

HOW to get the most out of appointments with medical consultants and staff will be explored at a workshop in Tuam in February.

The event is organised by Tuam Cancer Care and will focus on the importance of the doctor-patient relationship.

The workshop aims to explore issues such as how best to prepare for meeting with consultants and medical staff and what questions to ask in terms of waiting for test results or when given bad news.

Manager of the new Daffodil Information Centre at University Hospital Galway Aileen McHale-Ilffe will facilitate the workshop on Saturday morning, February 6 between 11 am to 1 pm. Aileen has extensive experience in the area of doctor-patient liaison.

Anyone interested in attending or would like more information about the workshop should contact Kathy at Tuam Cancer Care Centre on 093-28522.

Mystery thieves steal statues of Our Lady

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that had belonged to his mother.

It is this new statue that vanished without a trace two weeks ago along with another, smaller statue that was previously left untouched by the vandals.

The grotto was the idea of Mrs Whyte, an American woman who once stayed with the nearby Rhatigan family who helped build and maintain the roadside feature.

“It’s hard to know what the reasoning behind it is,” said Brendan Rhatigan, who now resides in Tuam.

“Naturally we’re all disappointed, the statues weren’t doing anyone any harm. It would be nice to find out the reason behind it although that might be asking too much. But hopefully they might turn up somewhere.”

The roadside grotto has been maintained for 56 years since the Marian pilgrimages in 1954 and is a familiar sight for pilgrims travelling to and from Knock.

“It’s hard to believe that someone could do this,” one local parishioner said.

“We really are in a quandary over what to do about what is happening. It was never touched for 50 years and it bothers us that someone is targeting it now, we don’t know who is doing it or why.”

The glass door of the grotto was locked at the time, however it is thought the freezing conditions meant it could be

Custody for Tuam brothers following assault

TWO Tuam brothers have been refused bail in connection with an assault on a man in the town last Monday week.

Twenty-one-year-old Tommy Conroy with an address at 143 Cloughran, Kilcloghans, and Martin Conroy (32) of 64 Dublin Road, Tuam, both appeared at Harristown District Court, Castlereah on Friday.

The two men were charged in connection with an assault using a golf club carried out on another man outside the Town and Country garage, Milltown Road, Tuam at 12 noon on Monday January 18.

The victim, who is also from the Tuam area and is in his 20s, was taken to University Hospital Galway but later transferred to Beaumont Hospital Dublin for treatment.

The injured man is now in a stable condition and he was moved at the weekend from the intensive care unit to a neurosurgical ward.

The two accused were refused bail yesterday and remanded in custody to appear again before Harristown District Court on Friday, February 5.

Youth pleads guilty to knife attack on Tuam Garda

A MAYO teenager pleaded guilty last Friday to assault causing serious harm to Tuam-born Garda Daryl Mullen in Westport last August.

The 16-year-old-boy, who can not be named for legal reasons, appeared at Castlebar Circuit Criminal Court before Judge Raymond Groarke.

He pleaded guilty to the stabbing of Garda Mullen, a native of Millstream Park Tuam, on Sunday, August 9, 2009.

The youth also pleaded guilty to being in possession of a knife on August 1. He has been in custody since last August.

Garda Mullen, who suffered serious injuries in the assault and was hospitalised for a lengthy period afterwards, gave evidence at the court in Castlebar.

Judge Groarke remanded the youth on continuing custody to appear again before Castlebar Circuit Criminal court for sentence on Tuesday, April 20.

Revenue find unbonded spirits in White House

THE proprietor of the White House pub in Garrafauns was fined €2,500 at Tuam District Court after she was convicted of having unbonded alcohol on her premises.

The Court heard how a Revenue inspector visited Claire Fitzgerald’s pub on June 23 last and searched the premises. A quantity of unbonded spirits were found including whiskey and brandy.

The Inspector told the Court that the raid was based on a suspicion that alcohol was being purchased in Northern Ireland and sold over the counter in pubs in the area.

The Inspector accepted that the defendant was not part of a larger smuggling operation they were investigating and she had personally purchased the alcohol across the border.

Antonia Canney solr (defending) said her client ran a small rural pub and was apologetic for her behaviour.

A receipt was produced to show she had acted alone and was not part of any larger operation.

Judge Browne said he knew times were tough for publicans but unfortunately the defendant had to suffer the consequences of her actions. He imposed a fine of €2,500.

Impact action will impact on VEC

THE sporadic industrial action by public sector workers who are members of the IMPACT trade union will impact on Co. Galway Vocational Education Committee (VEC) according to those attending their monthly meeting in Athenry.

“Pardon the pun but the IMPACT action will impact on our operations,” said CEO Joe McDonagh.

Chairman Pat Gilmore read a letter from the trade union stating that their action starts from this week and he said it would impact mostly on the administration side of their operations.

Fisheries Board brings County Council to Court on pollution charge

IF Galway Co. Council doesn’t pay a fine imposed for polluting the Derreen River will the County Manager be sent to prison?

This was a question posed by Judge Geoffrey Browne at Tuam Court when he convicted the Co. Council for a pollution offence and imposed a fine and costs on the local authority.

The Judge said it was crazy that those in charge of monitoring the environment were the ones who were charged with polluting it.

The case against the Co. Council was taken by the Western Regional Fisheries Board arising out a fish kill on the Derreen River at Danganbeg on March 19 last.

The Court was told that an accident occurred at a council water treatment plant which resulted in chlorine being released into the river.

A 1.4km stretch of river was affected but the damage to fish stocks was kept to a minimum because of the time of year when most salmon had migrated.

Galway Co. Council’s solicitor explained that there was a difficulty at the treatment plant and a quantity of chlorine was inadvertently released into the river.

The alarm was raised as soon as it was realised and the damage was kept to a minimum.

A new procedure has now been put in place to ensure such a mix-up could not happen again and the council regretted the incident, she said.

When Judge Browne asked if the council had any previous conviction for similar offences Mr Ford for the Fisheries Board replied “a few”.

Judge Browne impose a fine of €500 and ordered the council to pay the Fisheries Board’s expenses of €2,080 and costs of €615.40.

He then asked whether the Co. Manager would be going to prison if this amount was not paid.

Death of Canon Sean Blake



CANON Sean Blake, a native of Liskeav, Milltown, died suddenly on Friday January 22 in Clonberne, where he served as Assistant Priest (AP). Ordained in 1951, he served until 1960 in Connemara parishes, then spent three years in Huddersfield, England, and returned to the Tuam Archdiocese. He was CC and later PP in Castlebar from 1971 to 1992. There was a large attendance at his funeral over three days. Canon Blake was a member of a very well known Milltown GAA family and was himself considered to be a talented young footballer. Obituary later.

The Tuam Herald

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New Office Hours at The Tuam Herald

From now on our office hours are as follows:

Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5.30 pm