

COUNCILLOR

NOEL ROCK

25 Hardiman Road, Dublin 9

 085 704 9415 noel@noelrock.ie Noel Rock @NoelRock*Summer
2015***GLASNEVIN • DRUMCONDRA • BALLYMUN • SANTRY • WHITEHALL • BEAUMONT
NORTHWOOD • FINGLAS • MEAKSTOWN**

RESIDENTS AND PARENTS CAMPAIGN TO CLOSE ADULT SHOP SUCCEEDS

In June, I joined residents, parents and shopkeepers to campaign against a proposal to open a sex shop in Drumcondra, at the junction of Richmond Road and Drumcondra Road, facing St. Patrick's National School. Local residents in Drumcondra overwhelmingly expressed deep opposition to this and, together, we campaigned for its closure.

As soon as I learned about this development, I called a public meeting in the Skylon on the matter, which was attended by 100 local parents and residents. Together, we set out an action plan, and residents asked me if I would act as Chairman of our "Action Committee", which I did.

It was clear that the shop could not be objected to in terms of planning, as an adult sex shop constitutes a regular 'retail unit', and as the unit was already zoned as a retail unit, they were within the rules of the law as they stand.

However, it is also clear that this development was ill-suited to a residential area, and was inappropriate to be facing a school. On these grounds, we objected to both the owner and retailer, and delivered over 150 signed letters of petition on Monday morning. By Monday evening, it was agreed that the shop would not be opening. It was a testament to people power, and to the power of the community, that when residents and parents came together, we were able to stop a development which was both seemingly unstoppable, and due to open imminently.

However, there is still work to be done here. This kind of situation should never have arisen in the first place. I firmly believe Retail Planning Guidelines need to be changed to ensure that residential retail units can't be converted to adult shops without having to go through a planning process, at which time residents could then lodge their objections in a fair and reasonable way.

It's deeply unfair to a resident who buys a house next to an audio hi-fi retailer one year only to find that they are living next to an adult sex shop the next year, having had no chance to object or even comment on the matter.

Moreover, it doesn't seem right that such a development can take place opposite a National School with no avenue for the school or parents to object. These are issues which can be resolved by legislation in the Oireachtas, and I fully intend to ensure lessons are learned from this. While our campaign succeeded in keeping this out of Drumcondra, and away from the local National School, it's clear that this could easily happen again unless regulations are in place.

DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLANS FOR BALLYMUN AND PHIBSBOROUGH

Draft local area plans have been produced for Phibsborough (which will take in parts of Glasnevin) and a Local Area Plan Issues Paper for Ballymun (which, naturally, will take in all of Ballymun). The goal of the plans, ultimately, is to identify the issues for the local area which need to be addressed. Effectively, any future developments are then judged against the "gold standard" of a Local Area Plan, to ensure they are in keeping with the overall objectives set out for the area. I welcome this process, and believe it will be worthwhile to engage in the process when public consultations open.

PROPERTY TAX PROPOSAL COULD BENEFIT NORTHWOOD AND MANY OTHERS

In early June, I wrote to the Minister for Finance with a comprehensive Local Property Tax reform proposal ahead of Budget 2016, suggesting that property taxes should be reduced by up to 50%, on a sliding scale, for those who are paying management fees.

Over the last year, I have met family after family who are working hard, paying taxes, and then expected to pay an apartment management fee in addition to their property tax. This seems unfair and, in Budget 2016, we are in a position to remedy this inequity.

Currently, there are over 2,000 individuals who own dwellings in privately managed complexes in Dublin North West. They are subjected to both property taxes and management fees. These fees incur a substantial cost on these property owners. In the case of Northwood, for instance, the amount they pay in management fees are as high as €1500 annually.

I believe we need to go about this reform in a fair way. The costs associated with paying both property taxes and these management fees places a large burden on their financial resources. In order to offset this burden, I suggest implementing a sliding scale of tax relief. This scale would reduce property taxes for individuals who pay management fees. These individuals would receive a 5% break on their property taxes for every €70 paid towards management fees. This break would be capped at 50 percent. In this instance, an individual who pays, say, €500 in management fees would receive a 35% discount on their property tax.

I wrote to the Minister for Finance with a comprehensive proposal, outlining how this could be included in the 2016 Budget to alleviate this burden on families. He replied to say that this will be kept under consideration ahead of Budget 2016, and I have also raised the matter with the Taoiseach. This break is more than offset by the VAT earned on management fees. This would have a meaningful impact on many individuals and families throughout Ireland and I hope it will be considered.

ROYAL OAK: TRAFFIC, LITTER, DERELICT SITE ISSUE



I was glad to be invited to attend a recent meeting of residents of Royal Oak and Knightswood and discuss a number of issues which affect them, including traffic, litter and the derelict site which has turned into an environmental hazard.

I have made some representations on their behalf, and I know Councillors in the Fingal area have also

done this. I will work to ensure that Dublin City and Fingal Council's work together on issues which affect the shared boundary, specifically around traffic matters.

BALLYMUN POST OFFICE HAS FUTURE SECURED - WHAT NEXT NATIONALLY?

In June, I welcomed two bits of Post Office good news: first, the awarding of the tender for the Ballymun Post Office and, secondly, the publication of the initial report of the Post Office Business Development Group, saying it paints an optimistic picture for the future of post offices in Dublin North West and around the country.

The publication of the report follows the news that the tender for the Ballymun Post Office has been awarded to Robert Murphy, so it will be staying in the area and will be based in Supervalu. This is good news, and puts an end to the fearmongering being incorrectly whipped up by some local politicians".

On the wider issue though, the Chair of the Post Office Business Development Group, Bobby Kerr has emphasised that our post office network must diversify in order to secure its future and to grow. This Group's remit is to examine opportunities to deliver more government and commercial business through our Post Offices.

The Business Development Group is examining four main areas into which the post office network can expand: financial services; government services; social capital and enterprise and white labelling. Some of the ideas proposed include using post offices to pay motor tax, the local property tax, hospital charges and expanding the banking services already provided.

It's worth noting that the vast majority of post office closures took place during the terms of the last two Governments. This Fine Gael-led Government has protected the remaining network and has stated clearly that it wants our post office network to thrive.

BEAUMONT: CLARITY NEEDED ON DEVELOPMENT OF LAURENCE LANDS

Beaumont residents are being left with a huge amount of uncertainty relating to the development of the Laurence Lands. I have called on Dublin City Council to clarify their intentions for the development of this site and what type of development they have in mind. Recent suggestions of a particular kind of development have provoked speculation which is unhelpful to residents and I believe certainty is required. A survey that Cllr Gilliland carried out in 2014 showed that 90% of residents in the Castletimon area would prefer this to be developed as a community amenity for the area, and that it needs to be better lit and better maintained. I agree with this.

FINGLAS - PRIMARY CARE CENTRE BACK ON THE MENU?

In June, I revealed in the Northside People...that...the... City Council intend to put the stalled Finglas Primary Care Centre saga back on the agenda. This information emerged based on questions that I put myself to the Council, where they revealed that they have suggested five sites to the HSE. Let me be clear: regardless of what happened before, it's clear that Fine Gael wants to provide a primary care centre for Finglas and that the funding can be got to get this going, but what we need is a clear strategy in relation to a site and agreement around that. There simply aren't enough GPs in the area to serve the large population of Finglas South and Finglas West, and a Primary Care Centre is badly needed for local people.



I promised people in Finglas that I would work day and night to ensure a Primary Care Centre was acquired for Finglas, and that it would be on an appropriate site. I aim to ensure that this is kept on the agenda, and I welcome this release from Dublin City Council which outlines five potential sites, including Cardiffsbridge, Wellmount and Barry Road.

It's important that public reps work to keep this matter on the agenda, and make sure that there are no repeats of the kind of "blame game" we saw from the old Councillors after the last proposal fell apart. However, too many people have simply not been working to bring these vital resources to the area, and that's a great shame. I hope the HSE and DCC will work closely with the community on this and ensure there are no slip ups like last time. I certainly intend to keep the public well informed of this process every step of the way, as I have always worked to do.

GLASNEVIN NORTH - TIME TO STOP LEARNER DRIVERS USING PINWOOD/WILLOW PARK

In May, I requested that the City Council send a letter to the Road Safety Authority in relation to the number of learner drivers who are using the Pinewood and Willow Park areas as practice grounds for the tests. This is clearly a consequence of the number of tests which are carried out here, and I requested that the RSA urgently consider diversifying the testing areas they use and to consider suspending tests in our local area for a time, in order to encourage learner drivers to practice in a wider variety of areas.

The predictability of the test isn't good for learners, for teachers and above all else for the residents of Pinewood and Willow Park. In their reply addressed to me, the RSA said they would look into the matter and consider my proposals.

ADVICE CLINICS Every Saturday at 10.30am

Please ring 085 704 9415 to confirm appointment in advance

1st Saturday of month: Costa Coffee Finglas

3rd Saturday of month: Costa Coffee Finglas

2nd Saturday of month: Costa Coffee Santry

4th Saturday of month: Costa Coffee Northwood

Every Thursday at 6.30pm - Fagan's

Your team in Dublin North West: Cllr Noel Rock and Brian Hayes MEP.

25 Hardiman Road, Dublin 9

☎ 085 704 9415

✉ noel@noelrock.ie

👤 Noel Rock

🐦 @NoelRock

FINE GAEL 