

SUMMER 2011

Joe Carey TD

Welcome

I'd like to take this chance to thank you for picking up my Summer newsletter. I intend to produce regular bulletins to keep you informed of my work on your behalf as well as bring to your attention any issues I feel are of relevance.

After the first few months in office the Government has endeavoured to hit the ground running. While we continue to deal with the hole in our public finances, slowly but surely Ireland's reputation internationally is being repaired.

It was helped enormously by the State visits of both Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and US President Barack Obama. The Irish people, as well as An Taoiseach Enda Kenny and all members of the Government, gave both guests a truly Irish welcome.

As a result we see that for the first time in several years the tourist industry is beginning to show signs of growth. That is to be welcomed, especially for us here in County Clare given our reliance on this sector of our economy.

Challenges remain, particularly in the areas of Government spending. We have to do more with less and there will be many tough decisions ahead.

We need to tackle our unemployment levels, and I believe our recently announced jobs initiative will act as the spark to get this country back to work.

I strongly welcome the decision by the Eurozone to ease Ireland's debt burden by reducing our loan interest rate by 2%. This will potentially save the country up to €800 million. The time frame within which we will be required to repay the loan has also been increased substantially. Improving the terms of repayment for Ireland has been a fundamental aim of the Government since we took office in March and we have pushed for such a change at every opportunity and at every level. I am very confident that the rate cut will help Ireland's debt sustainability whilst also boosting investor confidence.

On a personal level, I was honoured to have been asked by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny to take on the role of Assistant Government Chief Whip as well as participate in the Committee on Procedures and Privileges. These appointments will ensure I continue to work at the heart of Government for the people of County Clare.

I look forward to seeing you either in person at my office, online or over the phone over the Summer months

Regards,
Joe



HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

There are now more ways than ever to get in touch with me.

My office is located on Francis Street in Ennis, and I hold clinics every Monday and Friday in person.

Outside these times, my secretary Kathleen Fitzpatrick or Parliamentary Assistant Paul Bugler will be glad to help you in any way they can.

My office is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 1pm and 2pm - 5pm. Telephone is (065) 68 91199

E-mail: joe.carey@oir.ie

I also maintain an active online presence.

My new website is www.joecarey.ie where I post links to Dáil speeches, press releases and announcements.



I am on Facebook and also maintain a presence on twitter: @joecareytd.

Calling all young Clare Entrepreneurs

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is organising a nationwide campaign offering young people aged between 15 and 22 with ideas on job creation a grant of €15000.



It would be fantastic to have local participation in County Clare in this programme. The young people behind the top proposals will be given the opportunity to shadow a leading business person and the overall winner will receive a research grant of up to €15,000.

Participants will be rewarded for their effort by receiving constructive

feedback from business leaders. To enter this competition simply email your proposal to minister_fitzgerald@health.gov.ie or send it to Minister Frances Fitzgerald, Dept. of Children, Mespil Road, Dublin 4. www.omc.gov.ie

Deputy Carey Appointment

Deputy Carey was recently appointed Assistant Government Chief Whip and a member of the Committee on Procedures and Privileges.

As Assistant Government Chief Whip, Deputy Carey will be expected to deputise for Government Chief Whip Minister Paul Kehoe, as well as liaise on a daily basis with An Taoiseach, the cabinet and TDs from cross parties through their respective Party Whips.

Deputy Carey will also be expected to monitor the progress of legislation through Leinster House by arranging the scheduling of time for legislation to be debated and considered in the Dáil.

Flooding Progress

Funding approved & details of Ennis Flood Relief Scheme Phase Two released

The proposed works for Phase Two of the Ennis Flood Relief Scheme have been outlined to me by the Minister for Office of Public Works Brian Hayes TD. Works will focus on a geographic area from Bank Place Bridge to the Railway Bridge past Knox's Bridge and will involve wall repairs and construction, as well as new surface water sewers. There will be three new surface water pumping stations built together with construction works in Conroadmore, Cappahard and Clarecastle areas. Work will also take place on embankment and wall construction to protect the Fíor Uisce and Aughanteeroe estates.

The current status of the scheme is that tenders have been received and evaluated. Funding of €13M was approved recently by Minister for Finance Michael Noonan. The total length of planned works will take 18 months, and the final budget will be announced once contracts have been negotiated.

These major works will prevent the historic flooding problem which residents and business people in Ennis have endured over many years. This news also comes at a time when the memory of the unprecedented floods of November 2009 which caused so much damage to homes and business premises are so clear in our minds.

I am looking forward to the Ennis Flood Relief Scheme Phase Two moving swiftly to the next stage with the signing of contracts and the beginning of construction work as soon as is possible.



Minister Brian Hayes & Joe Carey TD in Ennis

Flood Relief Works at St. Flannans, Ballybeg, Clarecastle to begin in the coming months

I am happy to be able to say we are now moving to the formal planning process stage with much needed flood relief works at St Flannans and Ballybeg, Clarecastle. My government colleague Minister of State at the Department of Finance Brian Hayes confirmed in recent weeks that funding is secured and Clare County Council are to proceed with the next step.

The scheme will consist of the construction of two culverts to facilitate the overflow from swallow holes at St. Flannans and Ballybeg. There are also proposals to improve the Fergus embankment in this area and to provide pumping facilities for flood alleviation, which may be required in the future.

Senior Engineer Tom Tiernan, Clare County Council has confirmed to me that he expects construction to get underway within the next 6-8 months. Should all go according to plan, then we are looking at a completion date of 12-15 months from now.

Funding approval for Lynx Cargo facility at Shannon Airport

As a long time campaigner for the provision of a major international cargo facility at Shannon Airport, I welcome the decision by the board of the DAA to give the financial backing for this facility.

I raised the issue many times over recent years with the last Government and more recently with new Minister for Transport, Mr. Leo Varadkar and the DAA to ensure the facility remained to the fore of the new Government's policy after the General Election.



The decision by the DAA to release the funding necessary for the Lynx Cargo hub is a vote of confidence not just in Shannon but also in the potential that exists across the whole of the Mid-West region.

With the opening up of US customs and borders pre-clearance for passengers, the time is now right to incorporate full cargo pre-clearance at Shannon Airport with the addition of the Lynx Cargo facility and help Shannon become a major transport hub.

The idea behind this is nothing new, as Government agencies in the region have been calling for this repeatedly over the past decade.

The proposed Lynx Cargo project presents a massive opportunity for growth and jobs creation. The investment that will be provided by the DAA to make this facility a reality is not overbearing when compared to the jobs and financial returns expected.

I want to congratulate the Management in Shannon Airport who have driven this project to this stage. I also want to compliment my Government colleague Minister Leo Varadkar for his insistence that the DAA would direct funding towards the project at a time when funding is tight across all Government departments and agencies.

I will be pressing for negotiations to be completed in a timely fashion so that this project can move to construction phase as soon as is possible.

Kilkee and Kilrush Sewage Schemes

Approval has been given to Clare County Council to progress the Kilkee and Kilrush Schemes to Preliminary Report Stage. It's anticipated that the combined cost of the scheme will be in the region of €17 million.

The scheme consists of the construction of two new Wastewater Treatment Plants in Kilrush and Kilkee together with the upgrade of the existing Network Collection Systems. I look forward to this vital scheme progressing to the next stage of it's development in a timely fashion.

New initiatives will help boost Mid-West tourism

The visa waver programme as well as the reduction on VAT rates from 13.5% to 9% for the hospitality sector are both measures which will benefit the tourist industry here in County Clare.

We have listened to concerns of hotels, restaurants, holidaymakers and many others involved in the sector.

As a result, Government has announced a short stay visa waiver programme.

This programme will apply to tourists and business people from 16 states, including China, India and Russia. Visitors from these countries will be able to stay in Ireland for a maximum of 90 days. This will ensure we encourage a greater number of tourists from new markets to visits here, and I would encourage all local tourist agencies to begin marketing the Mid-West to capitalise on this change in procedure.

The second initiative announced is a reduction of VAT in the hospitality sector from 13.5% to 9%. This is to encourage more spend on hotels, restaurants and many other businesses across the sector. I would encourage all businesses for whom the reduction applies to pass on the savings to customers with immediate effect.

Generally, it will mean a reduction for example in the price of an average meal in a restaurant or on a bed night in a hotel or B&B.

Last year, we already saw signs of recovery in the tourism market, with year-on-year growth of 8.6% per cent in visitor numbers in the first quarter of the year.

It is vitally important for areas like the Mid-West that this trend continues.

Michael Ring TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Tourism and Sport recently launched the Burren 4 Joint Ticket venture.



County Clare roads receives extra funding under Government jobs initiative

As part of the Government's 'Jobs Initiative', County Councils are being provided with an additional €60 million for the Regional and Local Roads Investment Programme. This funding is being provided under the Restoration Improvement Programme.

Under this Programme, County Councils have submitted a three-year programme (for the period 2011 - 2013) identifying the roads

most in need of improvement in their area. The additional funding being provided under the Initiative will enable local authorities to bring forward works on roads, which were not scheduled to take place until 2012. The funding will bring about an improvement in the condition of approximately 650km of regional and local roads at 554 different locations throughout the country.

In the region of 1,000 jobs will be created through this combined investment nationally.

I am pleased with the significant amount allocated to Clare County Council under this initiative. This funding will allow us improve our road network and create much needed employment locally.



Funding Boost

County Clare is set to benefit from a €300,000 funding boost for local tourist infrastructure such as walking and cycling routes. The money is for projects that will create employment in the short term and attract tourist into the future. This funding is significantly more than larger counties such as Kerry, Cork or Kilkenny.

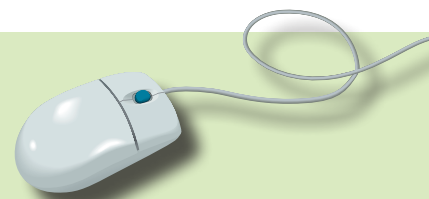
Broadband for All

A new government initiative has been announced to ensure all homes in the country have fast reliable broadband by 2012.

Any home in County Clare experiencing broadband issues, particularly in rural areas, should give their details to Clare County Council.

The Council in turn will pass these details to the Department of Communications, where a new taskforce has been set up to deal specifically with this issue.

Details of the complete scheme are available on the department's website www.dcenr.ie. It will operate in a number of phases. The first over the next three months will see applications accepted. There will then be a process of verification and contact will be made with Internet service providers. Some applications may get service under this part of the scheme, which should be completed within six months.



Clare Boundary Issue Resolved

I have sought a resolution to the Clare Boundary Issue issue for quite a period of time & am delighted with the Government decision to leave County Clare's historic boundary alone.

Below is edited extract from a speech I gave in Dáil Éireann one month prior to the decision being taken by Minister Phil Hogan.

"On the floor of Dáil Éireann, I want to reiterate my opposition to a boundary extension into County Clare. There is no justifiable reason why Limerick City should extend into County Clare. There is no justifiable reason why County Clare should sacrifice a portion of our lands to resolve a problem which clearly doesn't exist. The simple fact is, this proposal is unwarranted and would create much more problems than it would solve."

"We in the Banner County are a very proud people. Indeed, I am a proud Clare man, born and bred. County Clare is steeped in history, heritage and tradition. If a boundary extension into County Clare were to be granted - it would rob people of their identity, of their link to where their from, their very history and heritage."

"Changing a line on a map doesn't create a population - the people already exists - the critical mass already exists, but we simply live in different Counties. Placing 3000 Clare people into Limerick will not sort out our financial woes - it will however create bad feeling, division, resentment and bitterness."

"It's very clear the People of Clare are very much opposed to a boundary extension. I want to applaud the efforts of the 'Clare Against the Boundary Extension Committee under the chairmanship of Jim Gully."

Funding leads to opening of Tulla Astro Turf Facility

I was delighted to recently attend the opening of the Tulla Community Astro Turf facility in Cregg, Tulla .The opening ceremony was performed by Minister of State, Michael Ring TD and CEO of the FAI, Mr. John Delaney.

The new Government's decision to approve Leader funding for this project in late April 2011 facilitated its timely completion. This top class all-weather pitch will be of enormous benefit to several local sporting bodies.

I want to compliment Tulla Community Council and Tulla FC for putting together such an ambitious project . Sport plays a vital role in both social cohesion and in promoting a healthier society. Therefore, funding local projects such as this in Tulla is a win win situation. It ensures greater local participation in chosen sports but also helps harness and build strong communities.

Sixteen Clare schools will benefit from the Summer Works Scheme

The summer works scheme will see improvements in primary and post primary schools across County Clare. County Clare has done very well from the allocation, which is worth over €40 million to 453 schools nationwide.

In total, sixteen schools in County Clare will benefit from funding under the scheme. The works include both mechanical and electrical improvements and I believe that this funding will greatly improve those schools once the new school year begins in September.

The works in question cover projects in school buildings such as gas, electrical and mechanical works. These works will be carried out in these schools over the summer months, when the pupils are on holidays, so the disruption to schooling will be kept to a minimum.

The Schools, which received funding, are:

St. Tola's N.S. Shannon, Scoil Realt na Mara Kilkee, Kilnaboy N.S., Cooraclare Boys N.S., Parteen Mixed N.S., Kilmihil N.S., Rockmount N.S., O'Callaghan's Mills N.S., and Kilkee Boys N.S. Borane N.S., SN Na Maighdine Muire Broadford, Quin N.S., Scoil Na Maighdine Mhuire Newmarket-On-Fergus, and Miltown Malbay N.S., St Josephs Community College Kilkee and Ennis Community College.



Deputy Joe Carey pictured taking part in the Pakie Ryan Memorial Event in Newmarket on Fergus, with his daughter Alma (in buggy) and members of the TLC 4 CF campaign.

CONTACT JOE CAREY TD

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I also maintain an active online presence.

My new website is www.joecarey.ie where I post links to Dáil speeches, press releases and announcements.



I am on Facebook and also maintain a presence on twitter: @joecareytd.



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