

DUNDALK TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS



Non Party
Martin Bellew



Fianna Fáil
Seamus Keelan



Green Party
Mark Dearey



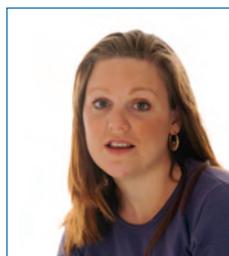
Sinn Féin
Ian Dooley



Non Party
Mary Grehan



Fianna Fáil
Seamus Byrne



Sinn Féin
Geraldine Murphy



Fianna Fáil
Noel Lennon



Sinn Féin
Kevin Meenan



Fine Gael
Jim D'Arcy



Fine Gael
Eamonn O'Boyle



Non Party
Jim Ryan

STAFF DUNDALK COUNTY COUNCIL

M. Moloney	County Manager
F. Pentony	Town Clerk
C. Duff	Town Engineer



Official opening of refurbished Town Hall

REFURBISHMENT OF DUNDALK TOWN HALL, TAIN THEATRE & BASEMENT GALLERY

The refurbished Dundalk Town Hall, Tain Theatre and Basement Gallery opened in January 2004. The Town Hall now combines with the adjoining Dundalk Courthouse to provide a most impressive civic 'heart' to the town. As well as housing the Dundalk Town Council offices and providing a modern, welcoming environment for Council staff and customers to do business, the Town Hall building also houses the Tain Theatre, refurbished with the aid of a €2 million grant from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. With new dressing rooms and 'green room' facilities, state of the art sound and lighting systems, raked seating on the ground floor and new bar facilities in the basement, the Tain Theatre is among Ireland's leading theatres. The Town Hall's Basement Gallery has also been refurbished and has tripled in size and now has excellent facilities for children's art workshops as well as catering for exhibitions by artists from Dundalk and beyond.

HOUSING

ALLOCATIONS TRANSFERS AND HOMELESSNESS

Allocations and transfers continued through the year, and the waiting lists moved well not least due to our substantial new build programme and the efforts of our housing maintenance squad in ensuring 81 vacancies were made available for re-letting. At the year end the numbers of households on the waiting list were as follows:

No. of Applicants for Housing:	1,086
No. Considered in urgent need:	75

The number of households presenting as homeless throughout the year remained constant, and our thanks go to the Simon Community for their efforts in this area over the past year, and for the success of the Gatehouse project, which opened in June 2004 and caters for up to 7 rough sleepers per night. Thanks also to the proprietors of Bed and Breakfast establishments who assisted us greatly with emergency accommodation in 2004.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE

The planned programme for installation of central heating in our OPDs and in homes where medical conditions required it was ongoing in

2004 with a further 81 dwellings completed. Also in 2004, the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government made finance available for an extension to this programme to include all tenancies that do not currently have central heating. The full installation programme will continue until the end of 2008.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The development of good estate management practices continued throughout the year and our Tenant Liaison Officer provided an area based housing service to Tenants Associations, Community Groups and tenants themselves, together with training, advice and support where requested. A tenant participation programme is being developed in the Oldbridge Housing Estate, Toberona under the auspices of the TLO, and strong progress is expected in 2005.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The implementation of the ASB policy established in 2003 continued through the year, with the following outcomes:

Total Number of ASB complaints in 2004:	23
Total Number of Interviews/Investigations:	15
Numbers of Warning Letters Issued:	3

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

No. of Applications in 2004:	70
Nos. Approved:	47
Sales Completed:	16

GRANTS LOANS AND SUBSIDIES

The various schemes were implemented throughout the year. Most activity was in the area of Disabled Persons Grants. The Self-Help grant scheme was introduced in July 2004, and to date over 30 applications have been received, with 17 valid and only 1 has gone to works approval stage.

NEW HOUSING SCHEMES

Mullaharlin Road

A contractor has now been appointed for this new development of 110 houses and work is expected to commence early in 2005.

Doylefort Road

This development of 138 houses is at the pre-qualification stage for tenders following approval of Part VIII.



Farnereg Social Housing

Woodland Park – Halting Site

The refurbishment works on this site were completed in 2004 and the site is now fully operational. Plans for an official opening will be announced in early 2005.

Farnreg Turnkey Development

Phase one of this development of 88 houses was completed in 2004 and the first tenants moved into the newly-named Clancullen Park in early December 2004. The next phase of allocations is expected in February/March 2005.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING SCHEMES

Development at Tom Bellew Avenue

Clanmil Ireland are building 69 houses at this location together with a crèche and office block. The construction continued throughout 2004 with an expected completion by Summer 2005.

INFRASTRUCTURE

ROADS PROGRAMME 2004

An allocation of €215,000 was received from the NRA and financed road surfacing works on the Newry Road and the Ardee Road as well as public route lighting and winter maintenance work.

A block grant in the amount of €523,000 from the Department was expanded on a range of projects as follows:-

- Carrick Road (R178), footpath renewal (McDermott's Terrace to Willow Grove, south side & Rooky Hill to town boundary north side)
- Barrack Street resurfacing
- Racecourse Road, build up and surface dress
- Yorke Street, resurfacing
- Coes Road, resurfacing
- Seatown Gardens, resurfacing
- O'Hanlon Park/Fr. Murray Park, resurfacing continued from 2003
- Muirhevnamor footpaths
- Toberona Road, footpath renewal (both sides)
- Ashling Park, provision of lay-by/parking at 454-467
- Union Street, school crossing
- Point Road, unfinished footpath
- Castletown Road, footpath from Castle Park to old graveyard
- Market Square, remedial works to eliminate flooding at pedestrian crossing points



Bothar an Iarnainn, Dundalk

From Dundalk Town Council's own financial resources the following projects were carried out by contract:-

- Road marking
- Traffic Lights
- Road Ramps
- Patching/Pot hole repairs
- Raising Man holes
- Demesne Terrace resurfacing
- Farnreg Estate resurfacing
- Junction Jocelyn Street/Seatown Place with Castle Road, repair, re-grade and resurface
- Centenary Road, extension to brick island
- Beechmount Drive OPD's (parking)
- Farnreg, footpath renewal
- Disabled Access Ramps to Rehab
- Cox's, remove illegal ramps
- Inner Relief Road, re-construction (250m pro rata on works completed in 2003)
- Ecco Road/Ard Easmuinn

Overall Compliance in Public Water Supplies

Highest Sanitary Authorities	Lowest % Compliance
1. Wexford	99.6% Compliance
2. Galway City	99.3% Compliance
3. South Dublin	99.3% Compliance
4. Dundalk Town	99.2% Compliance
5. Laois	99.2% Compliance

PUBLIC LIGHTING

The program for up-grading of the public lighting continued in 2004, with the completion of Phase VI and the next phase will be carried out in 2005.

NEW ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Bothar an Iarnainn (St Alphonsus Road to Avenue Road)

This scheme has been divided into two phases. Phase one from St Alphonsus Road to the Avenue Road was substantially completed in 2004. These works were undertaken as part of an agreement between Dundalk Town Council and Calderford Property Trading Ltd who are developing The Marshes Shopping Center. This project has been substantially completed and the road will open in 2005.

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The Town Centre Transportation Study was undertaken during 2004 by Traffic Wise and Brett Higgins Hayes. The Study addressed the traffic situation in the town centre, including one-way systems, pedestrianisation, parking, taxi ranks, transportation routes. The report will be available early 2005.

SANITARY SERVICES

DRINKING WATER

Cavan Hill and Castletown Mount water treatment plants produced

8,149,949 meter cubed of drinking water in 2004. "The Quality of Drinking water in Ireland - A Report for the year 2003" was released in 2004 and Dundalk drinking water was placed fourth highest when compared with the rest of the country.

WATER PRICING POLICY

The Council continued its program of installing stopcocks suitable for metering water usage, which is inline with the government's Water Pricing Policy. To date 720 non-domestic premises have had stopcock meter boxes installed. This program is continuing with completion due in 2006.

PLANNING

SOUTH WEST SECTOR LOCAL AREA PLAN

An Issues Paper for the South West Sector LAP was published in July 2004 and the public consultation process continued until 23rd August 2004.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SCHEME

Following the publication of a Draft Development Scheme and a period of public consultation in 2003, the Scheme was formally adopted on 24th February 2004.



Students at Dundalk Civic Amenity & Recycling Centre

ENVIRONMENT

LANDFILL

The restoration works contract went to tender in 2004 and a contractor will commence on site early in 2005.

CIVIC AMENITY SITE

The Council successfully procured funding from the DoEHLG in 2004 for an extension to the Civic Amenity & Recycling Centre. The Centre extension was completed in 2004 and includes significant improvements to the public courtyard reception area for green waste and the provision of a shredder for wood and paper materials. This will significantly reduce the handling costs for this material and the running costs of the Centre. A doubling of the size of the storage area for handling and packing the recycling materials has greatly increased the tonnage capacity of the recycling center and will lead to greater efficiencies due to economies of scale. This project was designed and managed by the engineering/technical staff in the Town Council

The success of the Civic Amenity Site continues to exceed expectations with 8,400 tonnes of waste collected for recycling in 2004. This represents over 29% of waste going to landfill under the

Council's landfill licence. In addition a further 1400 tonnes were recycled by householders using the green bin system supplied by waste collection contractors.



Improve our Town Competition

STREET CLEANING

The street cleaning contract for the town center is carried out by Dundalk Waste Disposal Ltd and progress was made during the year in both the National Tidy Towns Competition and the Louth litter League Competition. The Council now sends all road sweepings for composting, following the successful trial in 2003.

AMENITY GRANTS

The continued success of this scheme is reflected in the fact that over 55 Resident/Community groups availed of grants in 2004. The ongoing improvements carried out by these groups contributed to the increased marks awarded to Dundalk in the National Tidy Towns Competition.

IMPROVE OUR TOWN COMPETITION

This very successful competition rewards and recognises the efforts of the towns residents and business community to improve the environment of Dundalk and continues to attract a large number of entries.

Prizes were awarded in a large number of categories including Best Garden, Best Floral Display, Best Public House, Best Retail Premises and Most Improved Premises.

The adjudicators in the Tidy Towns competition commented: 'The impact of the Improve our Town Competition is very evident when travelling around the residential areas. The vast majority of them are being exceptionally well maintained and have wonderful colourful gardens!'

TIDY TOWNS COMPETITION

The year 2004 resulted in the town achieving its highest ever score. The efforts of the Parks Superintendent, Town Gardener and her staff and the various residents and tenants associations have paid dividends for the town. Hopefully, the town will be able to capitalise on the continued improvement to the environment and the completion of many fine developments like the Courthouse and Retail Park.

ARTS, RECREATION & AMENITY

ARTS

The RTE Concert Orchestra performed at the official re-opening of the Town Hall Theatre in Dundalk. This €2.5m regeneration provides a

much-improved technical facility for the theatre, a refurbished and expanded Basement Gallery, and the addition of a bar for patrons. The Town Hall Theatre also hosted Opera Theatre Company, Barnstorm Theatre Company, Aisling Ghearr, Red Kettle Theatre Company, and Ballet Ireland twice in its first season back in use.

One of the highlights of the year was the Abbey Theatre's "Playboy of the Western World" in the Town Hall Theatre. Touring to Dundalk as part of the Abbeyonehundred Centenary celebrations, the run of performances was the backdrop to a number of outreach initiatives such as youth theatre workshops, a workshop with Encore Productions, readings and talks.

The Basement Gallery returned to full programming in 2004 with exhibitions from the collection of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, John Keating, Constance Short, Linda Bailey, and the Town Council's own Municipal Collection.

MUSEUM

2004 contained a great many highlights for the County Museum. The year saw a number of new artefacts added to the permanent exhibition including a magnificent collection of items from the Near and Middle



The Liam McCarthy cup on display in Dundalk Museum

East to our Archaeological Floor, the development of a calendar of events, talks and lectures, the continuation of the Joint Education Project with the Newry Et Mourne Museum as well as the acquisition of items which will be unveiled to the public over the coming years.

The year saw the unveiling of a new addition to the permanent exhibition in the form of a number of archaeological items originating in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Dating from 1000 BC these artefacts have proven to be a popular addition to the collection affording visitors the opportunity to compare and contrast activities here in Ireland with other cultures. The items range from oil lamps, bowls and jugs to objects relating to rituals of death including a wooden funerary mask and an ointment vessel.

Other memorable moments from the year included a series of events to commemorate International Holocaust Memorial Day. These included a talk by Yanky Fachler on the experiences of his parents' families during the rise of Nazism, a series of readings by the authoress Marilyn Taylor from her book *Faraway Home* for Primary Schools as well as a lunchtime reading by members of the Dundalk Theatre Workshop which

proved to be extremely poignant and moving. Seachtain na Gaeilge was marked with the Liam MacCarthy exhibition which celebrated hurling's premier competition and featured not only the original trophy which bears MacCarthy's name but alsomemorabilia owned by Christy Ring, Jack Lynch, Michael Collins and Eddie Keher. Finally Christmas was marked with an exhibition of toys which charted societal changes in the Ireland of the 1950s to that of 2004.

The continued development of the Lifelong Learning Group based at the Museum has proved to be of immense interest. Topics discussed and examined by the group included aspects of gardening with a talk by award winning gardener Paul Martin, the work of the Museum, aspects of archaeology, the work of Paddy Kavanagh, a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Oscar Wilde's birth, as well as a six week art history course which examined the development of painting from the Renaissance through to the 20th Century. Organised in conjunction with the Arts Office this course proved to be exceptionally popular to the extent that a similar venture will be pursued in 2005.

The Joint Education Project continued apace with the Maritime Conference which featured a Viking Village in Carlingford replete with staged fights in early March as well as a conference in both Dundalk and Newry examining various aspects of the shipping and the marine in both areas. These events were complemented by a series of talks on a variety of topics including Unionism and Loyalism as well as a number of lectures for Seachtain na Gaeilge, October saw the highly successful Storytelling Festival held in both border venues with stories for young and old alike. With work continuing on the Oral History project, the Cross-border Education Project continues to go from strength to strength.

The Museum has also added extensively to its collection over the course of 2004. Amongst the most notable are a medal awarded to the Captain of the SS Dundalk which was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the First World War, a 15th Century 'rumbling bell' and a late medieval stone window frame which had been part of a chapel in Grange.

One of the best definitions of a Museum is that it is an institution which collects, conserves and communicates. Over the course of 2004 the County Museum, Dundalk has done this via the unveiling of new exhibits, the acquisition of new artefacts and the organisation of events, talks and exhibitions. In so doing it asks questions of the nature of our environment, the manner of our development and our expectations for the future the next year will do much of the same.

DUNDALK SPORTS CENTRE

As the only local authority operated Sports Hall at present in Louth the Dundalk Sports Centre continued to provide a base for many local sports clubs and organisations as well as running the popular Summer Activity programme children. Management of the Centre changed in late 2004 with the appointment of a new Recreation Officer, Graham Russell.

Mr. Russell, who will oversee new developments at the Muirhevnamore Park during 2005, replaced the original Recreation Officer/Manager of the Centre, who moved to his post as County Sports and Recreation Officer.