

CANAL ACTION PLAN ON WAY

A Grand Canal development group, set up to address the underdevelopment of this natural amenity, is making rapid progress on plans for the canal. Residents and business people with an interest in the issue turned up in droves to an initial community consultation meeting held in the Mespil Hotel in late November.

Chaired by Dublin South-East Fianna Fáil Dáil candidate, Chris Andrews, the group is finalising a plan with short, medium and long-term objectives for the canal. Among the issues identified were lighting, litter, the need for a Dublin based canal maintenance

and cleaning crew, improved signage and reactivation of the lockkeeper's house.

It was agreed to invite representatives from Dublin City Council and Waterways Ireland to the next meeting.

The Action Plan comes after it emerged that Waterways Ireland, 85% Government funded, returned €11.8 million unspent to the Department of the Environment.

Calling for root and branch reform of the organisation, Chris Andrews, in an interview with The Irish Times said: "This under-spend does not arise because the organisation has

completed its work efficiently. Rather, it comes at a time when Dublin's Grand Canal, a hugely underdeveloped community and tourist resource, is one of the most neglected in the country.

"While Waterways Ireland has done some excellent work in other parts of the country, the Grand Canal in our capital city remains one of the few canals without its own crew. A serious amount of work is needed to make it the amenity it has the potential to be," he said.

To join the Grand Canal Action Group please contact Chris Andrews at: 14 Rathgar Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6. Tel. 4062824 or 087-2851515 email: chrisandrews@eircom.net



PLAYGROUNDS - BUSINESS TO THE RESCUE - ANDREWS

Chris Andrews and local resident Donal Hannon enjoying the very successful Ranelagh Arts Fair.

Chris Andrews, Dublin South-East Dáil candidate is working for improving recreational facilities and playing surfaces in public parks, such as Herbert Park. He wants Councils to consider business sponsorship for advertising in and around public playgrounds and he has lobbied the Minister for the Environment and Local Government for his support. "This works very well in many countries," he says. "Clearly standards would have to be set to ensure it wouldn't offend aesthetically. Given the poor state of many of our parks new measures are needed."

ANDREWS SELECTED TO RUN FOR DAIL!

Chris Andrews has secured the nomination to represent Fianna Fáil in Dublin South East at the next general election. A delighted Chris Andrews said: "I'm honoured to have been selected as the Fianna Fáil standard bearer in the constituency. It will give impetus to my work with communities right across the constituency." Outgoing TD Eoin Ryan said he was delighted that the party had chosen Chris. "He has a proven track record in Dublin South East. He is not afraid to be outspoken when it is required. His strength is his

ability to work with people." Chris comes from a family steeped in public service. His grandfather, CS Todd Andrews, founded Bord na Móna and was Chairman of CIE and of RTE. His uncle is David Andrews, Chairman of the Irish Red Cross and former Minister for Foreign Affairs. His father, the former TD and MEP, Niall Andrews, served the people of Dublin for many years and was an MEP until his retirement in 2004, following which Eoin Ryan was elected MEP.

SMALL BUSINESS - INITIATIVE TO TACKLE OVER REGULATION

Small and medium business enterprises (SMEs) in Ireland have been the driver of sustainable growth in this country. "The SME sector is where dynamism and adaptability is most evident and most crucial," says Chris Andrews. "It is where tomorrow's entrepreneurs cut their teeth.

"However, over-regulation is a major burden. While workers must be protected, there is no doubt but that regulation has gone too far. Companies were never supposed to be legislative bodies or social watchdogs. That responsibility lies with individuals and with Government," he says.

To address the issue the Taoiseach has set up a working group to recommend areas where legislation can be made more coherent and where consultation with businesses on regulation implementation is prioritised.

"The recommendations will need to be implemented swiftly and completely," says Andrews. "As politicians we have a responsibility to ensure that this country is open for business. We need to ensure better value for SMEs for the contributions they make to the running of the city in charges such as rates, water and environment," he says.



TUBRIDY TODAY

Chris Andrews meets his cousin Ryan Turbidy at a fundraising event in Loretto College, St. Stephen's Green.

BUDGET - BIG INCREASES FOR CHILDCARE AND OLDER PEOPLE

The Budget Childcare package includes:

- ◆ New €1,000 annual payment for under 6's
- ◆ Increased child benefit payments
- ◆ Five year investment programme to support 50,000 extra childcare places
- ◆ 17,000 extra childcare workers to be trained over 5 years
- ◆ Tax free earnings of up to €10,000 for childminders caring for up to three children in their own homes.
- ◆ Extra 4 weeks paid maternity leave in 2006 and a further 4 weeks in 2007.

Minister of State for Children Brian Lenihan is to take responsibility for childcare as part of a series of measures aimed at increased co-ordination of childcare services and policy. Chris Andrews says: "As someone who has been a long time advocate of the centralising of what had become a very fragmented area within Government, I very much welcome Minister Lenihan's new role. I look forward to working with him in the future."

An additional €150m budget package of measures for the elderly, includes:

- ◆ More physiotherapists and chiropodists
- ◆ Increased respite care
- ◆ Increased nursing home subvention payments
- ◆ €16 and €14 increase in the non-contributory and contributory pension, respectively
- ◆ Carer's allowance increase of up to €30 a week, bringing the top rate to €200 and
- ◆ Weekly fuel allowance increased from €9 to €14.

More elderly people should also be able to qualify for nursing home subvention payments. Under new assessment criteria, applicants will be able to have homes worth €500,000 in Dublin and still qualify for the top rates of subvention.

ARTISTS TAX EXEMPTION

Minister Cowen's decision to retain and cap the Artist's Tax exemption is very welcome, says Chris Andrews who fought hard for its retention and made a submission on the topic to the Minister.

"The exemption plays an important role in fostering and developing the arts in Ireland. Art enriches our society and we now have an opportunity to build on the benefits to date and strengthen arts organisations country wide, so as to secure the basis of a vibrant and stable arts community. We must also strive to make sure people from every section in society benefit," says Andrews.

SALE OF COUNCIL FLATS

The sale of City Council flats to the tenants who wish to buy is approaching a pilot scheme stage. "The Government has given the Council the green light to move ahead with the sale of the flats," says Chris Andrews who fought on Dublin City Council for the implementation of this option. "It is a rights issue," he says.

TRAFFIC EDUCATION SCHOOL



Chris Andrews with children and parents from Scoil Bhríde and Lios na nÓg, Ranelagh campaigning for improved pedestrian safety.

Are you between the ages of 8-14? Do you want to get the chance to drive pedal cars and ride bicycles and at the same time learn important pedestrian and cycling skills?

If so, why not visit Dublin City Council's Traffic Education School (TES) at Fairview Park in Clontarf. It's open during the normal school day and classes operate at 10am and 11.30am. Groups with special needs and disabilities are also catered for. Don't forget to wear suitable clothing for wearing out of doors.

For further information or to book, ask your teacher to contact the Road Safety Unit. Tel: 6722265 or email: roadsafety@dublincity.ie

AN GHAELGE AGUS GAELSCOILEANNA!

Is céim tabhachtach é an cinneadh an Ghaeilge a ghlacadh mar theanga oibre oifigiúil laistigh den AE, de réir Chris Andrews. "Ardóidh sé stádas na teanga taobh amuigh de Éireann agus is spreagadh suntasach é do chothú na Gaeilge anseo sa bhaile", a dúirt sé. "Tá gluaiseacht na Gaelscoileanna imithe ó neart go neart i mBaile Átha Cliath, ag tabhairt oideachas de chaighdeán an-ard do dhaltaí ó gach saghas aicme. Beidh ról tabhachtach ag na Gaelscoileanna in athbheochaint na Gaeilge."

Mar thuismitheoir ar dhá pháiste atá ag freastal ar Gaelscoil, tá taithí pearsanta ag Chris ar ról agus feidhmiú na Gaelscoileanna.

The recent decision to accept Gaeilge as an official working language within the EU is an important step for the language, according to Chris Andrews. "It will improve its status outside Ireland and it gives a very welcome boost to its promotion here at home. The Gaelscoileanna movement has gone from strength to strength in Dublin, providing pupils, from all walks of life, with an excellent standard of education. Gaelscoileanna will play an important part in the reinvigoration of the language".

As a parent of two children, both attending a Gaelscoil, Chris has first hand experience of the role played by such schools.

EMERGENCY AID RESPONSE NEEDED

The recent crisis in Niger highlights just how deeply the United Nations is failing Africa," according to Chris Andrews. "There is no early warning system. This must be addressed as a matter of priority if we are to have any faith in the organisation," he says. "A unit that could rapidly respond to emergencies is needed, urgently. Rather than waiting for a disaster happen, this unit

would have a fund which it could draw upon as the need arises.

Our commitment to underdeveloped countries is an expression of our values as a country," says Andrews. "Ireland has now committed itself to contributing almost two billion euro between 2005 and 2007".

FIANNA FAIL SAYS 'NO' TO INCINERATOR

Fianna Fáil members in Dublin South East met recently to strengthen their campaign of opposition to the building of an incinerator on the Poolbeg peninsula.

Speaking after the meeting, Chris Andrews said: "Dublin City Council can roll out as many "experts" as they wish, residents know from experience that the infrastructure needed for an incinerator is not in place. Sandymount, Ringsend and Irishtown do not have the

capacity to take the huge increase in waste carrying trucks." The group is exerting pressure on Minister Roche to visit and view first hand. "This project does not make sense from a good planning perspective," says Andrews. At the meeting he reiterated the importance of members supporting the Combined Residents Against the Incinerator (CRAI). CRAI can be contacted via: Frances Corr, 83 Bath Ave, Dublin 4. Tel: 6674580



Chris and Taoiseach Bertie Ahern with Seamus Ryan and Lisa Murray, 2005 Mens and Ladies Captains, at the Elm Park Golf Club.



Chris Andrews with organisers of the Noel Fox Memorial Cup. Ringsend Rovers were worthy winners over an excellent St Pat's CY under 19s. The final took place at the Clann na Gael Fontenoy pitch. Clann na Gael were, as usual, excellent hosts.

ABOUT CHRIS ANDREWS



Chris is a Dáil candidate who believes in: "Fair, responsible policies that will bring about a greater balance in our society and ensure that everyone has an equal right and opportunity to participate in education, training, work and leisure and where services are accessible and focussed on the real needs of people. We need honesty in public service so that we can deliver social justice in a modern Ireland," he says.

Chris has campaigned strongly on many issues - local, national and international, among them the sale of Council flats to tenants, the adoption of "the precautionary principle" in relation to electromagnetic fields (masts) to protect human health and the lifting of sanctions in Iraq.

RATHMINES MAST LEADS TO LICENCES HALT

The Office of Public Works has placed a hold on the granting of licences for the erection of telecommunications masts in the vicinity of schools, it has emerged.

The hold will remain in place until a special Interdepartmental Committee on the Health Effects of Electromagnetic Radiation, which has been set up by the Cabinet, reports.

Chris Andrews who has been campaigning strongly on the issue, says:

"I would expect and hope that the sub-committee will quickly issue recommendations for revised guidelines. Meanwhile, the equipment installed some months ago on Ardee House, beside St Mary's College in Rathmines, must be switched off."

So far, the service companies have refused to do so. A protest is planned and Andrews is encouraging everyone with an interest in the topic to get involved.



On the doorsteps, Chris meets Claire Fleming in Sandymount

RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Fianna Fail is currently on a recruitment drive. If you're interested in making a difference locally and nationally, Chris would be delighted to hear from you.

Email: chrisandrews@eircom.net or write to Chris at: 14 Rathgar Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6. Tel: 4062824

FIANNA FÁIL - DELIVERING LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, INTERNATIONALLY

Chris Andrews is working with



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