

Plans for a Melanoma Conference in Leixlip

by Laura Mc Loughlin

THERE are plans for a Melanoma Conference to be held in Leixlip which will bring together representatives from skin charities from across the country.

The event is being proposed by the Leixlip based charity Melanoma Trust which is run by Peter and Bernie Rice who lost their daughter Sharon to skin cancer in 2008.

LIFFEY CHAMPION met up with Peter on Friday, 10th March to discuss the charity's upcoming plans.

The idea for the conference came about after Peter, from Newtown Park, travelled to Boston last November to attend a Global Melanoma Conference and it was here he seen the benefits of getting experts together to share ideas.

"If I could get representatives to sit around a table and exchange ideas on how we can move forward, what we are lacking in, what we need to be doing more of," said Peter "That would be a huge step-forward."

Peter is hoping to send out invites for the conference on 8th May which has been named as World Melanoma Day.

Peter said drug trials is an area where Ireland can improve and he said this can be done by "getting heads around a table".

Another project the charity is working on is the total ban of sun beds in Ireland.

Peter's wife Bernie succeeded in getting the Government to ban the use of sun beds for under 18s after the lobbying of Ministers year after year however, they are now looking for a total ban.

"We already have the under 18s ban but it's not good enough," said Peter.

"They have banned them in Australia and Brazil.

"When you see the hardship that people go through when they get this skin cancer.

"And it is preventable.

"Sunscreen prevents it, covering up. "When I'm away cycling I wear a long-sleeve jersey.

"With the modern materials you can't say it's too hot because you can get long sleeves that are totally breathable.

"Athletes use them. So someone out working could easily use them."

Last year Peter undertook the Trans Canada Highway challenge cycling a distance of 9,177km across Canada in order to raise awareness about melanoma.

This year Peter is again taking on a major challenge, the EuroVelo 1 Cycle route, which covers 9,100 km along the Atlantic Coast taking in Ireland, Scotland, Norway, France, Spain, Portugal and Wales.

The first part of his journey will begin this Friday (17th March) when he will set off from his house in Leixlip cycling from Rosslare and over to Cork.

Peter will begin the next part of his journey on 27th April and will cycle the Wild Atlantic Way from Cork over to Larne in County Antrim.

The EuroVelo route then travels the coast of Scotland over to Aberdeen and up to Norway.

Peter will break his journey into three parts covering around 3,000km at a time.

Peter's journey can be followed on Facebook and Twitter pages 'Where is Grandad Now?' where you can see a live feed of his travels.



Peter Rice pictured in Leixlip on Friday, 10th March.

Debate over "toxic" Rathcoffey junction

by Kate Donoghue

ISSUES relating to the Rathcoffey junction in Maynooth were raised at a municipal district meeting on 8th March last.

At the meeting, Cllr Teresa Murray (Ind) highlighted that the item of the junction was missing from the progress report for the Draft Maynooth Traffic Management Plan.

She described the junction as "toxic" and said "we really need to hear that something is going to be done".

Officials said that they were working through all queries raised before the final report goes to public consultation.

Cllr Murray pointed out that it was agreed that an in-committee meeting would take place prior to the monthly meeting in April before the report went to public consultation.

She said that no improvement had been noticed at the junction so far despite assurances that there were plans in place.

"The company that was hired to survey that junction - there was a report and in that they said that some tweaking of those lights would make a difference to traffic flow.

"We had asked at the last meeting that we would have a trial period of that so I'm just wondering is that going to happen?"

Senior executive engineer, Donal Hodgins said that the Rathcoffey junction, like all junctions in the county, is constantly being monitored.

"There are over 250 junctions - we have one technician who monitors all the junctions.

"This junction in particular is connected to the junctions at Manor Mills, at the

Church, the Square, the junction at the Glenroyal and the junction at the Celbridge Road.

"So anything we do there, we have to take into account what the knock on effect is.

Cllr Murray asked how long it would take to assess the situation and "try some tweaking".

Mr Hodgins replied that the process had started.

"We're working on it, we've made some changes to the timings, we're evaluating that, it's going to be an ongoing process.

"We haven't forgotten about the issue and we're working on the issue.

He explained that he had to make sure that anything they did to alter the sequencing of the lights wouldn't make things worse.

The proposals from the consultants, Mr Hodgins said, were run in a simulated environment and didn't account for "real-life situations" arising from the back lanes or the nightclub car park.

"From my point of view, if I'm going to do something, I have to be sure it's not going to make it worse. I'm not afraid to implement the plan - we just have to make sure it's right."

Cllr Murray argued that those issues must have been known to the consultants, who were quite sure their solution would make a difference, but no improvement had yet been seen.

"I can't over-estimate how complicated the issue is," said Mr Hodgins, "there are 17 or 18 thousand vehicles going through Maynooth.

"There isn't that level of traffic going through Naas town centre at the moment. I'm certainly not going to jump from point A to point B without doing it incrementally."

OPEN PLAN HOMES

structural wall removal

Open Plan Homes is a new construction company based in Leixlip, set up by brothers Richard and Peter O'Hagan. Richard and Peter have over 20 years building experience together, completing projects all over Leinster.

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