

Up to 80 children will be denied



Derek McSweeney (Chairman of the Board of Management) addressing the meeting.



Cllr Naoise Ó Cearúil making a point during the meeting.



Chairing the meeting in Scoil Uí Riada, Kilcock were (l-r) Barbara Geoghegan and Brendan Shavey (Parents' Council), Sean Ó Conghaile (Teacher), Seamus Ó Muirithe (Principal) and Rachel Hedly (Parents' Council).

by Kate Donoghue

ALMOST 80 children will be deprived of an education in Irish if a third stream isn't approved for Scoil Uí Riada, heard a public meeting in Kilcock last Wednesday night week (25th January).

If no third stream is approved, there will be just two places available in September, as 52 of the 54 places on offer are assigned to siblings of students already in the school.

For the third stream to be granted, the application must first be approved by school patron, Bishop Denis Nulty and then by the Department of Education.

"At this stage, you can be assured, and reassured, that both the patron and the department have the application," said principal, Seamus Ó Muirithe.

"The patron must support the application to the Department of Education, so that is where our appli-

cation lies at this juncture."

Meeting-chairman and schoolteacher, Seán Ó Conghaile informed the meeting that the bishop was presently in Rome but the application was sent and he had likely already been made aware of it.

More than 170 concerned parents and supporters attended the meeting.

Brendan Shalvey, whose daughter is on the waiting list for September, spoke at the meeting as a representative for parents of children who have not yet been offered a place.

He was among those to express frustration in the system which gives the school's patron the power to deny a child an education in Irish.

"It seems odd to me, that an unelected person has the capacity to deny my wish to have my daughter educated in her own language," said Mr Shalvey.

Mr Shalvey added that he found it absurd that a man who wasn't necessarily

accountable to him has more authority than elected officials to dictate educational policy.

"I'm not sure of Bishop Nulty's qualifications, maybe he's extraordinarily good at this, but I have not invested in him moral authority to act on my behalf.

"If he is a patron of five schools, can he really act in the best interests of each one?"

"My concern is that I want my child educated in Irish. I don't care how many places there are elsewhere."

Mr Shalvey concluded: "It should be a cause for celebration that our language is held in such esteem that almost four times the amount of people that can be accommodated want their children educated here.

"And yet, it isn't a cause for celebration."

Scoil Uí Riada has been dealing with the issue of insufficient places for years, said Mr Ó Muirithe.

"The previous views of the Department of Education and the patron have been that Kilcock is adequately served by the enrolment policy that accepts two junior-infant classes in each of the village schools.

"This view doesn't take account of the ethos of Scoil Uí Riada as an Irish school nor any account of the huge demand and the huge surplus that has existed here for the last 6 years."

Mr Ó Muirithe went on to say that the government view does not take the school's catchment area into consideration:

"Scoil Uí Riada proudly serves the Kilcock area, but we are also proud to serve the communities of Clane, Donadea, Rathcoffey, Summerhill, Enfield and the areas in between.

"Approximately 33% of our children come from outside the Kilcock area. And in the applications for this September, 37% live more than 3km from the

school."

Chairman of the Board of Management, Derek Sweeney told the meeting: "the opinion of the Department of Education is that you have no legal right in Irish law to have your child educated through Irish.

"There is an obligation to provide places for every child in the area and they say they have done that."

There was a strong presence of public representatives at the meeting, and out of those who spoke, support was unanimous.

Bernard Durkan, TD (FG), James Lawless, TD (FF), Cllr Naoise Ó Cearúil (FF), Cllr Réada Cronin (SF), Cllr Teresa Murray (Ind) and Cllr Tim Durkan (FG) all confirmed they were behind the application.

Apologies were made for Cllr Paul Ward (FF) and for Catherine Murphy, TD (SD), who could not attend because of bereavement but sent her support via Cllr Murray.

"All my children went to



A section of the large attendance at the public meeting in Scoil Uí Riada, Kilcock. Pics: Mark Cribbin

education in Irish



Richard Hennessy addressing the meeting.

Scoil Uí Riada," said Cllr Murray.

"I fully support all the parents in this room and I understand the stress this causes," she added.

"The demand is there; the Government is not listening. They're not looking at the demographics or the huge population increase."

Cllr Durkan suggested bringing the county development plan to the attention of the school's patron.

"There is a proposal to put in 1,300 houses in Killocock over the next five years," he said.

"That is something that should be brought to the attention of your patron to support your case."

"The other thing that will support the case is the catchment area," added Cllr Durkan.

"You're catering for a large demographic and a wide area."

Cllr Ó Cearúil recommended to concentrate on the patron for now.

"It's been held up, to be brutally honest, by the bishop's house and in my view, that's where the focus and the pressure needs to be."

One proposal was to hire a bus and stage a demonstration at the bishop's house, the concern being

that letters might easily be ignored.

A petition was passed around to the almost 200 people present.

One parent, Joseph Carrick said he found it "disturbing" that children are being turned away when their parents want them to be educated through Irish.

"I actually find it completely disgraceful," said Mr Carrick.

"I thank the TDs for their words of support but what these parents want is not words, it's action."

There is a social media campaign underway on Facebook (Scoil Uí Riada - TRÍ mheán na Gaeilge) and Twitter (@SUR_CillChoca) to raise awareness of the need for a third stream.

Scoil Uí Riada's plight has also been featured nationally on TG4, Raidió na Life and The Sunday Independent.

"I think the Irish language is an unstoppable force," Deputy Lawless told the meeting.

"It's still the first language in our constitution, it is something that is growing at every stage," added Deputy Lawless.

"The case makes itself and the numbers in the room speak volumes."



John McEvoy asking a question.



Phoebie Bardán giving her opinion.



Cllr Padraig McEvoy speaking at the meeting.



James Lawless TD giving his support.

Vote to take place on merging north and south Kildare chambers of commerce

by Laura Mc Loughlin

NORTH Kildare Chamber will have an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) on Wednesday, 8th February to vote on whether its chamber will merge with the Newbridge Chamber in the south of the county.

Discussions have been ongoing between the two entities since early 2016 with the view to having a county wide chamber.

Speaking about the move President of North Kildare Chamber Vivian Cummins said: "The two affiliated Chambers of Commerce in County Kildare, North Kildare Chamber and Newbridge Chamber (t/a Kildare South Chamber) have been engaged in a facilitated process since early 2016 to examine the merits and optimum method of creating a single Whole County Chamber to represent and promote the

interests of the business community throughout the County of Kildare.

"This endeavour has enjoyed the support of multiple stakeholders within the public, private and educational sectors."

Mr Cummins said the Executive Committees of the two respective Chambers signed an agreement on 22nd December 2016.

"This outlines the key recommendations to bring about a whole County Chamber to be voted on by the members of the two Chambers at EGMs to be held in February 2017.

"We believe this agreement has the best potential to deliver greater benefits to our members through sustainable growth and to ensure the Chamber's resources are utilised to provide maximum delivery of services to member organisations on a local, regional and national level."

Friday, 20th January

by Laura Mc Loughlin

■ THE Council's Parks Department will arrange the removal of trees and repair footpaths which have been damaged in the Grove Estate in Celbridge that have been raised by tree roots. Cllr Kevin Byrne (Lab) raised concerns about "dangerous lips" along the footpaths in the estate.

■ THE AREA at the entrance to Ryevale in Leixlip across from Galvin's Cross was described as "unattractive" by Cllr Joe Neville (FG) who requested that the area be cleaned, sprayed or possibly planted this year. Cllr Neville said it wasn't a huge area but it is very visible when you come into the village.

■ A ROAD sign that reads "Caution Stop Ahead" on the Aghards Road leading to the junction with the Shackleton Road in Celbridge will be removed by the Council. Cllr Michael Coleman (FF) asked at the meeting for it to be cleaned and said it was a "real eye sore" but was told it was no longer required. Cllr Coleman said it was great that the

CELBRIDGE-LEIXLIP MUNICIPAL DISTRICT NEWS IN BRIEF

sign could be taken away.

■ REPAIRS have been carried out to the cycle track on the Shackleton Road in Celbridge at the junction with the Aghards Road following a request by Cllr Coleman.

■ A PEDESTRIAN crossing was requested at the end of English Row where it meets Tea Lane in Celbridge by Cllr Byrne. Cllr Byrne also asked if a footpath could be provided from the grotto to the entrance of St Raphaels Special School. However he was told there is no funding available for but it could be considered as part of the Local Property Tax funding.

■ A PROBLEM with street lighting on the path way from the Riverforest entrance in Leixlip to the Glendale estate was raised by Cllr Bernard Caldwell (Ind) and he was told that the light in question is now operational following the connection of the light to a new supply by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB).

■ THE street lighting will be accessed at the bottom of the Captain's Hill in Leixlip and the Arthur

Guinness car park after concerns were raised by Cllr Caldwell. "These are two areas in Leixlip very well used," said Cllr Caldwell "The car park is very dull, it's very busy especially at nighttime."

■ THE FOOTPATH at the vehicular entrance to Leixlip library will be repaired by Council engineers after it was raised by Cllr Anthony Larkin (Ind) at the meeting.

■ A SPEED survey will be carried out on the Lords Road, Celbridge after concerns were raised by Cllr Coleman. Cllr Coleman said residents have fears of speeding vehicles on the narrow road.

■ THE yellow box at the entrances to Aldi and Hawthorn View on the Maynooth Road in Celbridge will be repainted when weather conditions permit following a request by Cllr Coleman.



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