

## IRD Chairman

As the 1st. anniversary of the official launch of Sneem-Castlecove-Caherdaniel I.R.D. on August 8th. 2002 fast approaches it is perhaps an appropriate time for us to both reflect and to look to the future. The three parishes have come together so as to try to arrest the declining population of the region and to try to re-generate it. Our first major good news was the provision of funding by the government for the appointment of a full-time manager and Joe Burke was duly appointed and commenced work in the former 'Ring Ballroom' in late November of last year.

A detailed business plan had been submitted to the Government and its main priorities included--

1. The development of Affordable Voluntary Housing Schemes.
2. The development of Tourism Related activities.
3. The development of Tele-working/Call centre/ I.T. oriented enterprises in the area.

The manager's role is to lay the necessary foundations to bring the above mentioned plans to fruition. There is already considerable progress in all these areas, as reported elsewhere in this Newsletter. In particular land has recently been acquired in Sneem in order to build houses with the support of Kerry County Council and the Department of Environment and Local Government.

For anyone involved in Tourism, I would look upon the I.R.D.'s efforts to have the region accredited as a 'European Geopark' as a most significant long-term project that if successful should bring huge benefit to the whole area.

The I.R.D. again invites anyone with ideas for the development of the region and the creation of badly needed employment to make contact with Joe in the Enterprise Centre or indeed with any member of our committee. In particular we invite people with holiday homes in our area to consider if they could help in any way. (It is hoped however that people will understand that the committee has to compile a list of priority projects.)

As everyone knows money is always required to make any progress. For example, though we have received an offer of €18,500 in grant aid from the South Kerry Development Partnership Co. to undertake a complete 'Feasibility Study' on the 'Geopark' concept, our company has to provide matching funds of €6,500 so as to avail of the offer. At this stage I would like to thank and congratulate all the people who have made generous contributions to date and I would urge

those who haven't done so to date to seriously consider doing so. (Details are available elsewhere in this newsletter.)

In conclusion, I believe that the ground work is being done that will bear fruit and be of benefit to the whole region in the not too distant future. 'Ní neart go cur le chéile.'

## Planning

The I.R.D. continues to campaign against the provisions of the 'Draft Co. Development Plan' that want to curtail the granting of planning permission to people in Rural Areas and likewise the sale of 'sites' in such areas. The I.R.D. is fully supportive of the need for 'good planning practice' but is adamant that the farming community and those living in 'Rural Areas' should enjoy the same rights re. Construction and Sale of property etc. as their counterparts within town boundaries. The I.R.D. urges people living in rural areas to contact their local 'Councillors' so as to ensure that their traditional rights are also upheld. Incidentally the New Development Plan will be adopted following a vote by all County Councillors by December of this year.

## Back to Education

In association with the Kerry VEC and County Enterprise Board we will run two computer courses plus a series of talks on Landscape features of our area over the winter months.

All courses for the computer classes will be held in the Pottery Shop Castlecove, More details on courses and registration will be published in early September.

## Rural Bus Service

The Kerry Community Transport have now two routes in operation for our communities; Castlecove/Caherdaniel to Cahersiveen every Thursday.

Sneem to Killarney every Saturday. Ring 1890 528 528 for more details.



## South Kerry Housing Association Ltd

The association has acquired land in Sneem and propose to build houses with the support of Kerry County Council and the



Department of Environment and Local Government. We would like to remind people who are interested in a house that they must first register their name on the County Council housing list (Forms available from IRD office or County Council). We are still very anxious to find suitable land in Castlecove and Caherdaniel and anyone with information about land that might be available is asked to contact either the IRD office or any member of the committee.

## Conservation Volunteers National Nature Awards

The Geo Park proposal has made it to the final 20 from 150 entries of the National Conservation Awards, sponsored by Vodafone. If successful it will add considerable funding for the development of the project.

## SCC Enterprise Centre

We are glad to announce that three enterprises have moved to the centre; Walking Kerry Tours, South Kerry Advertiser and Fine Prints.



## Water Services

It's well acknowledged in the development of any town or village that if there is not sufficient Water quality/capacity and Sewage infrastructure in place that it will hold up the development of those towns and villages. We have initiated talks with Kerry County Council Environmental and Water officials to discuss options on how we can move forward on these services for Castlecove, Caherdaniel and Sneem.

## Tourism Initiative

**CREATION OF GEOLOGICAL PARK AND INTERPRETIVE CENTRE TO ESTABLISH THE AREA AS A NEW GEOTOURISM and EDUCATIONAL TOURISM DESTINATION** - provide sustainable development in the area with a view to attracting ongoing revenue and employment into the area.

### Geo Park Concept:

An outstanding feature of the area is the way it combines a number of unique natural landscape features i.e. mountains and lakes that can be visibly traced back to the **ice age** with rivers that run into an indented coastline. The confluence of these natural features in the Sneem, Castlecove and Caherdaniel area can be built upon to demonstrate in real and recreated terms, the natural history of Ireland and its relationship to Europe.

### The Product:

A world class user-friendly, accessible Natural History interpretative facility that would attract tourists, educational institutions, environmentalist and special interest groups to the area.

Initially, this could start with a Natural History Centre that could provide exhibits and simulated experiences of a 'natural history journey of the world' i.e. from ICE AGE to the age of Technology using materials and images of the world/geography etc but relating back always to the local examples in Sneem, Castlecove and Caherdaniel.

It could then be built on by providing trips to representative locations/developments in the vicinity.

## Fund Raising

Since October of last year when we set our goal of €20,000 we have received contributions of almost €17,000 from a total of 125 people.

We will be continuing our efforts in the coming weeks in order to reach our target.

People who have perhaps forgotten to make their contributions are invited to send cheques Made payable to SCCIRD Ltd. to T. O' Sullivan, Chairperson, SCCIRD Ltd., Enterprise Centre, Sneem or alternatively to any member of the committee.

Those wishing to pay by standing order may contact their bank and arrange for the money to be credited to the account of the SCC IRD Ltd. A/C no. 86865581 Sort Code: 90-57-31 at the AIB Kenmare.

## FAS Training



Congratulations to all those that completed the FAS sponsored ECDL course. All participants passed the final exam with flying colours. This will be of great benefit in attracting potential employers to the area.

## Triathlon

Congratulations to all those in Castlecove and Caherdaniel who were involved in organising the recent triathlon which proved to be a major success.

## Garden of the Senses

Congratulations to the Sneem Co-Op and the FAS workforce who created the unique Garden of the Senses in Quay Road, Sneem. This is undoubtedly a major asset and attraction in the area.

## IRD Outreach Services

IRD services in addition to our regular office services are available at outreach locations as follows:

### First Thursday of Each Month

11.00am to 12.00pm

Blind Piper Caherdaniel

12.30am to 1.30pm

Pottery Shop Castlecove

All IRD services are strictly confidential. Services include employment, enterprise, education, training, and community development.