

Naughten and Harkin vocal on head shop issue

Local TD Denis Naughten has again questioned the Taoiseach on the Government's inaction in addressing the serious safety concerns surrounding the operation of head shops.

Speaking in the Dáil on Wednesday week last, Denis Naughten pointed out that there has been a further death of a young girl in the UK following the consumption of toxic chemicals sold in head shops.

He requested that the Taoiseach take immediate steps to regulate the operation of head shops as well as to ban many of the dangerous chemicals they are selling. While the Government is stating it cannot do anything for the next three months, Denis Naughten has argued that immediate steps can be taken within the current law, if the political will is there.

In response the Taoiseach said, "I do not have to hand that information". Deputy Naughten intends to raise this matter with the Taoiseach again this week, seeking a full response to the issues raised.

Independent MEP Marian Harkin has established with the European Commission that 'head shop' products can be controlled immediately on the basis of public health or safety.

Referring to correspondence from the European Commission Marian Harkin said:

"Recent statements from the Irish Government indicate that they must wait three months before getting EU clearance to ban or control certain substances, yet on close reading of the EU directive it is clear that this three-month moratorium does not apply in certain cases e.g. those 'occasioned by serious and unforeseeable circumstances relating to the protection of public health or safety'.

"Without any doubt recent events in Ireland and the UK indicate that we need to protect public health and safety immediately and Article 9(7) of the relevant directive allows us to act now. It is also worth noting that some of the substances that the Irish Government



Jacqui Snype and members of Roscommon Anti Head Shop campaign pictured during a protest outside the Dail last week.

propose to ban or control are already controlled in other EU states e.g. Mephredone is controlled in Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Romania, Sweden and Norway, the Netherlands and Finland. GBL is con-

trolled in Bulgaria, Latvia, Italy, Romania, Sweden and the UK. 1.4 BBD is controlled in Sweden and Bulgaria.

"Overnight the Irish Government guaranteed the banks and sorted it out

with the EU Commission later.

"This situation is every bit as important, the legislation allows them to act so there is no excuse for waiting," concluded Marian Harkin.



Three awards for The Yew Tree

The Yew Tree restaurant in Lecarrow recently won three awards in the prestigious Restaurant Association of Ireland Awards.

The Lecarrow restaurant was nominated by independent judges in the categories of Best Customer Service, Best Chef, and Best Overall Restaurant in County Roscommon and took home all three awards.

Owner Ger Aherne said, "This is a huge honour for us as we are constantly striving for excellence in this industry, which is made especially difficult during these challenging times. We have now successfully qualified for the regional and national leg of the competition and will be representing Roscommon in all three categories in a 'Black Tie' Gala Ball in the Burlington Hotel on the 9th June.

"We are a young enthusiastic workforce, who are hiring local people and sourcing our food locally also. We feel that all our hard work is paying off; striving for the highest standards possible and these awards can only benefit the growth of our business."

The Yew Tree will feature in the Sunday Independent's Life Magazine on April 18th April. The Yew Tree has also started an outside catering branch of the Restaurant, getstuffed.ie, which as has received an incredible response within the locality, sourcing fresh fruit and vegetables locally when possible, delivering high quality food, excellent service and value for money, so for your catering needs big or small, see www.getstuffed.ie.

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