

ROADS CLOSED

Bleak outlook for major local project

■ Paul Healy

Major road projects in County Roscommon may not now proceed for many years due to a lack of funding. The multi-million euro Roscommon Town Bypass, Boyle Bypass and Scramogue to Ballaghaderreen projects are all now thought to be 'off the agenda.'

A report in Tuesday's Irish Independent indicated that the NRA (National Roads Authority) has run out of money which had been earmarked for up to 40 major roads projects - including bypasses and dual carriageways. The report says that news of the shelving of the projects will be contained in a Government mid-term review of the National Development Plan (NDP) which is due to be published in the coming weeks.

According to the Irish Independent report, there's no prospect whatsoever of the Roscommon Town Bypass proceeding

at present. Also 'suspended' are the Sligo Bypass, work on the Scramogue to Ballaghaderreen route and the Boyle Bypass.

Aspokesperson for Transport Minister Noel Dempsey said that no projects have been cancelled but it was likely that deadlines (i.e. completion by 2015) for projects identified in Transport 21 would not be met.

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Party) said that news of the shelving of the Ballaghaderreen project does not surprise him.

"Transport Minister Noel Dempsey only recently gave a commitment in Ballaghaderreen that the project would begin this year but I am not surprised that it's not now going ahead. Fianna Fail didn't build it when they had the money, we can't expect it to happen now. I won't believe there's anything happening on that project until I see the diggers on site."

Deputy Denis Naughten of Fine Gael said that the upgrading of our N5 and N61 roads infrastructure is absolutely vital to the economic development of the country, "indeed to our economic recovery."

"The economic recovery of the whole West is dependent on these projects...it is vital that this roads infrastructure is developed as we depend on these roads for access to our major ports and if these projects don't progress it will put existing and future employment in jeopardy."

15,000 people now unemployed locally

Local TD Denis Naughten has described as "appalling" the fact that there are now 15,032 people unemployed in County Roscommon and adjoining towns.

"Such a high rate of unemployment on top of the number of local businesses going bust is forcing many unemployed workers into leaving the country," warned Denis Naughten.

"The real worry is that the Government's response to the economic crisis has

been entirely negative and without a new positive approach there will be little hope of a job for many on the dole today.

"We need innovative ideas to kick-start investment in our national infrastructure. The benefits of this are threefold: it will get people back to work immediately, help to address some of the costs facing local business and put us in a much better position than we are now to be able

to take advantage of recovery when it does come.

"Last winter's flooding underlines just how inadequate much of our local infrastructure is. Let's get unemployed tradesmen to work building flood defences. We also need to roll-out a proper national broadband programme; the current proposals are inadequate and will not deliver. In this regard our size is a major advantage, Ireland should lead the world in the quality of our network not constantly be playing catch up with our competitors. Yet such proposals have been ignored by Government.

"The Government must balance the negative impact of cuts in the Budget with some positive ideas and concrete proposals. We must get the country back to work," concluded Denis Naughten.

Connaughton welcomes work at Four Roads and Rahara

Work on roads at Four Roads and Mount Talbot was welcomed this week by local councillor Martin Connaughton, who complimented Roscommon County Council on doing a first class job on the roads in the Mount Talbot and Four Roads area. He also welcomed work carried out recently on the Rahara to Athleague road.

Mohill hosts 'wedding of the year'

■ Ashling Flanagan

Irish rugby captain Brian O'Driscoll recently tied the knot with actress Amy Huberman in the Irish celebrity wedding of the year, which took place on Friday last, with the marriage in the parish of Aughavas and the reception in Lough Rynn Castle.

O'Driscoll arrived 35 minutes early for the 2 pm service, while Huberman, wearing a strapless off-white dress designed by Stephanie Allen, arrived 20 minutes late. She carried a bouquet of white and pink roses, and the four bridesmaids wore individually designed pink dresses.

The couple were greeted by a couple of hundred locals who had turned out to wish them well. Before the service, O'Driscoll and other sports stars went down to the greet the crowd and sign autographs. Tributes to the couple were everywhere throughout the parish, with one woman holding a garden party in their honour across from the church, and a "good luck" message displayed on the local



Brian O'Driscoll pictured with Clement Gaffney, Director of Lough Rynn & Kilonan Castle, his wife Olivia Gaffney, Sales & Marketing Manager at Kilonan Castle & their son Sean.



GAA pitch's scoreboard.

The reception was held in Lough Rynn Castle Hotel, near Mohill, Co. Leitrim. Lough Rynn Castle, which has an estate of over 300 acres, is one of Ireland's most luxurious hotels, and is the ancestral home of the Clements Family and Lord Leitrim. A champagne reception was held on the lawn, followed by a six-course meal in the banqueting hall, with music provided by the Late Late Show house band, the Camembert Quartet.

Some of the celebrity guests included Paul O'Connell, Shane Jennings, Rob Kearney, Gordon D'Arcy, Jamie Heaslip, Donnacha O'Callaghan, Guy Easterby, Shane Horgan, Luke Fitzgerald, Dublin comedian David O'Doherty and 'IT Crowd' star, Boyle native Chris O'Dowd. Ronan O'Gara and his wife Jessica were unable to attend, as they were celebrating the birth of their new baby boy in Cork University Hospital. Taoiseach Brian Cowen sent the happy couple a message of congratulations.

The partying went on well into the night, with a barbecue held the following day on the grounds of the hotel, with entertainment provided by the Coronas, and food provided by the Gourmet Burger Kitchen.

Local companies benefit as Amy and Brian tie the knot

A large number of local County Roscommon companies benefited from the wedding of actress and author Amy Huberman and Ireland and Lions international rugby player Brian O'Driscoll in Leitrim last Friday.

Lough Rynn Castle was the venue chosen by the happy couple for their reception and the sister hotel in the Hanly Group, Kilonan Castle near Keadue, also accommodated guests. The Mass booklet for the occasion was designed by Paper Republic and printed by The Printworks in Deerpark, Boyle. A spokesperson for The Printworks told Roscommon People, "While all customer are treated like celebrities it does make a change when you actually print for celebrities!"

Flowers for the occasion, including the bouquets for the bridal party, as well as the flowers for the church and hotel were by Calla Floral Design in Strokestown, owned by Josephine Rogers. Make up for bride Amy Huberman on her big day was done by Blush beauty salon in Strokestown.

Boyle Camera Club member John Reynolds was the official photographer for the hotel and Boyle actor Chris O'Dowd, a long-time friend of the couple, featured in several of the photos.

Amy Huberman & Brian O'Driscoll



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