

'High Times' saga set to end on Friday

■ Paul Healy

The controversial 'High Times' head shop in Roscommon town is set to be formally vacated this Friday – earlier than at first thought – according to the owner of the premises, local businessman Mr. Adrian Murray.

The Roscommon People has established that a full hearing on Mr. Murray's application for a

court injunction is scheduled for today (Thursday, June 10th) in Portlaoise. Mr. Murray was granted an interim injunction in Tullamore Court last week – but, speaking to the Roscommon People this week, Mr. Murray revealed that he has received confirmation in writing that the tenant of the head shop will vacate the premises by this Friday, June 11th.

Apologising for all the controversy and con-

cern which the head shop issue has caused over recent months, Mr. Murray said that he believes the matter is now "done and dusted" and that he hoped everyone could now "move on."

Mr. Murray said that the five-month saga had taken a considerable toll on his family and the staff of his public house, whom he wished to thank for their understanding and support.

Ms. Jacqui Snype of the Anti-Head Shop Com-

mittee welcomed news of the court injunction. She said that products had been removed from the premises last week and that 'High Times' had not been open since last Thursday night.

In a statement issued to the Roscommon People this week (see elsewhere on this page) Ms. Snype said that it is time for the committee and their supporters to take a bow and be proud of "what we have achieved."

Adrian Murray: 'It's done and dusted now... I hope we can all move on'

- Landlord apologises for saga
- Speaks of toll on family and staff
- Tenant to leave by Friday

■ Paul Healy

Adrian Murray, proprietor of Murray's Bar and the owner of the premises in which the 'High Times' head shop has been based, has spoken this week of the five-month saga which is now coming to an end.

Speaking to the Roscommon People yesterday (Wednesday), Mr. Murray said that he has received written confirmation that the tenant of 'High Times' will have vacated the premises by this Friday, June 11th (earlier than previously expected).

The controversy erupted locally after the Roscommon People reported on page one of our edition of January 15th, 2010 that a head shop had opened in Roscommon town – and that there was a resulting public outcry.

Mr. Murray, who runs Murray's Bar at Castle Street, Roscommon, is the landlord of the premises in which 'High Times' has been based.

Explaining why he sought a court injunction, Mr. Murray said: "I have said all along that



all I could do was deal with this issue through the legal route. I have been concerned from 'day one' about head shops and the products they sell – and I have been concerned about the potentially serious effects on the

community. I wish to apologise to the public for what happened (the opening of the head shop). I wish it didn't happen at all in the first place."

Mr. Murray sought and was granted an interim court injunc-

tion in Tullamore Court on the 2nd of June, with a full hearing scheduled for today (Thursday, 10th of June) in Portlaoise. It is understood that the basis of the injunction application relates to the usage of the premises

as a head shop. Notwithstanding that the hearing had yet to take place as we went to press, Mr. Murray said that he has received, in writing, confirmation that the tenant of the head shop will be vacating the premises this Friday, June 11th.

"I hope now that all of us can put this matter behind us. I want to apologise to the people of Roscommon. The matter has now been dealt with, which I am very pleased about."

Mr. Murray said that, contrary to the perception which he felt had come across in the media, he had at all times kept channels of communication open to the protest group.

"I feel I have been pro-active on this issue from 'day one' but that this hasn't come across in the media. I have communicated with the protest group from the beginning. Any time Jacqui Snype or Michael Earley (of the protest group) contacted me I always took their call or rang them back. The only time I said 'no comment' was on one occasion recently because I was aware of the route (legal) I was

taking and I didn't want to get into pre-empting that."

Mr. Murray said that the five-month controversy had taken a considerable toll on his family. "Yes, it has been a difficult period for me, and for my wife Liz, and indeed for the staff in our bar. It has been very difficult at times.

"I really want to thank our bar staff, who have had to put up with all of this. I also want to thank our customers, who stood by us during the protest, and I also want to thank the wider public, many of whom have been very supportive during this difficult time.

"However, while it has been stressful, I want to emphasise that I am not here to throw stones....I am holding my hands up and apologising for all that has happened. I didn't want it to happen in the first place. I have been trying to do something about it and I am very glad that we got the injunction.

"I believe it's done and dusted now and I hope we can all move on."

Committee says 'thanks' and hails 'people power'

Jacqui Snype of the Anti-Head Shop Committee acknowledged this week that Adrian Murray had sought a court injunction in relation to 'High Times' continuing as a head shop. In welcoming the news, she added: "We only wish he had done this when we asked him to four months ago. It really seemed a waste of time getting it now, as the new legislation due out this month will close head shops anyway."

In a statement issued to the Roscommon People this week, Ms. Snype added: "Naturally, our group is on a HIGH at the moment (excuse the

pun). It has been a long, hard road for us. Many a night we thought, to hell with this, then someone would say 'let's give it another week.' We were out in rain, hail, frost and snow, fingers gone blue and toes gone numb. People said we were great and asked how did we keep at it. When you start a thing, and feel as strongly as we did about having a drug shop in our town, you don't give up.

"We were so grateful to have the premises from Sean Doyle and the facilities from Frances to make our coffee and warm ourselves on the bitter cold nights. 'Internuts' became

our second home! I think at this stage, with all we have conquered, featuring on radio, TV and in papers, we could write a book. We made new friends and had such fun. It became a great social gathering!

EDUCATION

"We endured many a new experience along the way, from which we have all learned. All in all, it was an education, from the clients using the shop, the staff who worked in the shop to the terrible abuse we were given while doing our peaceful protest, which lasted almost six months."

The statement, issued by Jacqui Snype, went on to acknowledge the support of many people. "To Eamon and Mary Gleeson for the use of their meeting rooms whenever we needed them, thanks. To Roscommon Signs and XLNT Signs and to each one of you, (especially my husband Padraic) who had any part in this campaign, including well-wishers by text, calls and emails, I would like to say, from the bottom of my heart a very big, sincere thank you. It has been my pleasure to have met and become friends with so many new people from Cork to Don-

egal and to have succeeded in what we set out to do. Most of us were married, with both jobs and families, so without the help and support of our partners, this would not have been possible.

"It is now time for us to take a bow and be proud of what we have achieved, not only for our town, for our country too."

With reference to a recent headline in the Roscommon People – 'People Power 1 Head Shop 1' – which personnel at the head shop had responded to (People Power 1 Head Shop 1), the statement concluded: "Final score: People Power 2 Head Shop 1."



Jacqui Snype of the Anti-Head Shop Committee