

# Community Playgroup issues appeal for new premises

■ Pauline Scott

Staff at management at Roscommon Community Playgroup this week issued an appeal for new premises, as the 26 children attending the Henry Street-based playgroup require more space and improved facilities.

Roscommon Community Playgroup, a non-profit organisation, has been based at Henry Street, Roscommon, since it was established in 1993. However, as the service has grown, it has outgrown its present facility, but no funds are available from the Government for the creation of a new community childcare facility for the county town.

The building where the playgroup is based belongs to Roscommon parish, but in recent months the Pre-school officer with HSE West has become increasingly insistent that new and improved facilities are needed for the children attending the playschool. However, with no funding available to build a new facility and no money to spend on rent, the community playgroup now finds itself in a precarious position.

Playschool leader Bernadette Mullen explains, "We are here since 1993, in a parish-owned house. The HSE Pre-School officer has said we have to get out of here or seriously upgrade the facilities. Increased space is required. We have received a site from Roscommon County Council at Hawthorn Drive, but don't have an application for planning permission submitted and if we upgraded the current premises, we would have to move out of here while the work was ongoing.

"State capital funding has dried up. While we have the site from the Council, we don't have money to build anything. We have been looking at other options, mainly renting, but we cannot afford that. We are a non-profit organisation and we have a maximum of 13 children here per sessions, with two sessions each day from Monday to Friday.

"We offer the new Free Playschool Year and are open 38 weeks per year for that. The money provided by the Government for the playschool falls short and so we



Children pictured at Roscommon Community Playgroup in Henry Street, Roscommon Town. Pic: Andrew Fox.

are constantly fundraising, with raffles and fundraisers, but with just 26 families currently availing of the service, it's difficult to be constantly fundraising, but there's no way out.

"The HSE Pre-School Officer is working with us and we have written to the Parish Council to see if they can help us in any way. They have asked two representatives from the Community Playschool to go and meet them. We met with them a few years ago, when funding was available from the Government and drew up a feasibility study after that," concluded Bernadette.

Roscommon Community Playgroup always has a waiting list for children availing of the service and just a few places remain for next year's service. Any new premises secured by the Playgroup would have to have access to an outdoor area, which could be converted to a play area. One possible solution would be for unemployed local people with construction experience to get involved in a building project similar to that conducted by the Niall Mellon Township Project in Africa. Roscommon Community Playgroup offers two pre-school services per day, from Monday to Friday, with the first

session from 9 am to noon and the second from 1 pm to 4 pm, both for children aged two to five. The playgroup has one full time and two part-time staff and is run by a voluntary committee of parents and interested others. Manager Bernadette is joined on the management committee by a group of committed parents, including Chairperson Liam Corcoran and Treasurer Mary Doyle.

Anyone with ideas on how Roscommon Community Playgroup can overcome the impasse it currently faces can contact the group at [roscomplaygroup@eircom.net](mailto:roscomplaygroup@eircom.net) or call (090) 66 27208.

## Movie evening

This Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup> is movie evening for members of Roscommon's Foróige First Year Youth Club. Entry fee is €5 and this will cover refreshments and raffle and a 'Find the Hidden Treasure' draw will take place during the break, €2 per square. Money raised will go towards further events in the club.

A great term is planned for the club between now and early summer with lots of fun things to do! Watch out for a themed disco (other clubs invited), cinema trip to a sports day in Donamon etc. The club had a break over Easter. Hope everyone had a lovely break, enjoyed the parade and ate loads of eggs after lent. On the subject of Easter eggs, a big thank you to all who supported our Easter Egg Raffle which raised the great amount of €164, which will go to help with the cost of activities. The winner was Aidan Duignan.

## Lisnamult draw

The following are the winners of the April draw for Lisnamult Residents' Association: €€200 Caroline Dunne; €75 Hannah Hannon; €30 James O'Rourke; €30 Assumpta Lennon; €20 Kevin Glynn and €20 Salome Egan. The following were €25 winners in the additional draw: Joan Devereaux; Peggy Conway; Grant Leonard; Agnes Davis.

## Comórtas Ealaíne

Congrats to Etain and Erin, rang 6, Gaelscoil de hÍde and to Aoibhe, Cadhla, Jade agus Samantha, rang 5, winners in the recent art competition organised in conjunction with the launch of the Roscommon Drama Festival. Maith sibh.



Winners from the McDermott School of Classical Ballet and Dance in Roscommon at the Irish National Dance Awards held in Longford on Thursday, 8th April, Megan Morris and Aisling Dolan.



Left to right: Pat O'Rourke, Carol Saunderson and Sheila Macken, members of Roscommon Garden Club pictured making a presentation to Oliver McGuinness of Mayo Roscommon Hospice, proceeds of a gala night held by the club in December.

## Garden club thanks

The committee of Roscommon Garden Club would like to thank most sincerely all members and everybody who came to the Gala night held last December.

The Gala night is held in aid of a local charity and the event last December was held in aid of Mayo Roscommon Hospice, with proceeds presented to local organiser Oliver McGuinness. Members of the Garden Club recognise the current difficult economic climate and were delighted to be able to make such a generous donation to Hospice. The generosity was due to all who supported the event.

As the weather is now much im-

proved everyone is encouraged to get out in the fresh air and add lots of colour and interest to the hanging baskets, window boxes and containers.

The next meeting of the Garden Club will take place on Monday, 26th April and members are delighted to have as guest speaker, Claire Harrington Hussey. Members have known Claire for many years and she has been a keen supporter of the club and in fact she was chairperson of a previous committee. She kept members very amused and entertained throughout her time in office and members are looking forward to hearing her talk and to enjoying

many moments of wit and wisdom.

Claire's talk will start at 8 pm but the annual plant sale will start at 7.30 pm. The plant sale is a bring-and-buy sale and the proceeds will go into the club to help raise funds for the running of the club. This is the time of year to split and divide perennials that have grown too large and if you have sown too many seeds, now is the time to pick them out. Don't throw them on the compost heap, pot them and bring them to the plant sale, as the club needs your help to keep going. As the saying goes, the club is only as strong as its members.