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Headshop protest heads for Dáil

The Roscommon anti headshop group will protest outside Dáil Éireann on Wednesday next, March 24th.

A statement issued by the Roscommon protestors stated, "Currently there are over 100 such outlets throughout the country selling psychotropic drugs. The substances are labelled as bath salts and pot pourri and are labelled not for human consumption.

"There have been catastrophic consequences in some cases and in others, serious psychosis. In Cork Dr Chris Luke, a consultant in emergency medicine has called for closure. So has Dr Desmond Corrigan, Chair of NACD. In Dublin, Dr Bobby Smyth, Psychiatrist with the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services, has reported a rise in cases reporting for treatment. Psychosis in some cases can become a lifelong illness. Despite claims to the contrary, children as young as 13 years are

being served. The Minister for Children Barry Andrews TD has remained silent on the issue.

"On 24th March, the Roscommon headshop group, together with other supporters will mount a picket at Dáil Éireann to remind politicians of their concerns and to insist that all headshops be closed without delay. Planning laws, product liability insurance and more have to be enacted without delay. Romania and Sweden have acted with great swiftness. Therefore Ireland can do so if there is a political will. Head shops agree to regulation. Head shop owners know that they can get around regulation and outsmart the state. Paraphernalia too must be banned. The Government must not continue to profit from the sale of dangerous substances though those shops.

"The support of the Senate, where a cross-party group has been formed, is appreciated. Many politicians, including John Curran,

Minister with responsibility for Drugs, also supports the campaign. Public concerns have to be recognised and respected by our policy makers and we would appreciate meeting and sharing them with our elected Dáil representatives during our protest at Dáil Éireann on 24th March."

Representatives of the Roscommon anti-headshop group also travelled to a meeting in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel in Athlone on Thursday night last. Speakers at the meeting included Gardaí, an A&E consultant from Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, Grainne Kenny from Eurad, parent Linda and Jim Henson. A&E Consultant Dr. Laura Bandbut told guests of the increase in the number of young people she sees being treated in A&E and warned that there is no difference between illegal and legal drugs in the harm they are causing.



Retirement from Carrick National School

A great crowd turned out for a Mass in the Church of The Immaculate Conception in Ballinlough on the occasion of Mr. Gerry Markham's retirement as Principal of Carrick NS, Ballinlough. On the day Gerry was presented with gifts from the children of Carrick school, the teachers, the parents, the community and The Board of Management. Gerry's wife Teresa was also presented with a bouquet of flowers. The children from the school took part in various aspects of the Mass. A party followed in Glavey's Community Centre, which was full of delicious delights! We wish Gerry a very happy and healthy retirement.

Members of the Board of Management pictured with Gerry after Mass in Ballinlough. Back row (left to right): Jimmy Flynn, Marion Greene-Forde, Joan McDermott, Chairperson, Christina Gormley, Miriam Winston, Peggy Cheevers (Principal). Front row (left to right): Teresa Markham, Gerry Markham, and Rev. Fr. Joe Feeney. Pic: Glynn's Photography.

Gala fund-raiser and 'Hunt fever' in Lecarrow this weekend!

■ Paul Healy

Roscommon Hunt and the Lecarrow Benevolent Fund Committee are joining forces this weekend to host a major Hunt Charity Ride followed by a fund-raising night for the entire community.

It promises to be a memorable day and night in the Lecarrow area this Saturday, as local man Billy Kelly outlined to the Roscommon People.

"On Saturday the Lecarrow area will welcome the Roscommon Hunt and in fact the Hunt folk are joining up with the Lecarrow Benevolent Fund Committee...the Hunt will start and finish in Lecarrow and we'll have a gala night in Kelly's Lounge, with funds raised going towards worthy local causes."

It's welcome evidence of 'more of the same' from the Lecarrow committee. A real sense of community spirit was very much in evidence back in 2001 when a small group of local people set up the Benevolent Fund, inspired by the desire to raise monies for local causes.

Billy Kelly, current chairperson of the committee, was one of the founder members. "We started the committee in 2001. Our activities since have been based around the Hunt. Over

the years we've held quite a few fund-raisers and raised money for various causes. We make a donation to the senior citizens group in Lecarrow and we've also made donations to the patients' comfort fund in the Sacred Heart Hospital, the Alheimers Foundation, Guide Dogs Association, Carers Association, Mayo/Roscommon Hospice, the Lourdes Invalid Fund and the Mentally Handicapped Association."

The Lecarrow Benevolent Fund Committee is currently busy raising funds again, and it will all come to a head on Saturday night, as Billy explains.

"This year we spoke with Micheal Curley of the Roscommon Hunt and we are delighted that the Hunt's Charity Ride will be based around Lecarrow on this Saturday, March 20th.

"The Charity Ride will start at 12 noon in Lecarrow on Saturday and continue on to Kiltoom and Curraghboy. There will be stops for refreshments at my own house and in Daly's Tavern in Kiltoom. We would expect to be back in Lecarrow at about 6 pm. It's about a 16-mile round trip."

Regular Roscommon Hunt enthusiasts will be joined on the Charity Ride by locals

from Lecarrow. Then there's an 'open invitation' to everyone from the locality to meet up in Kelly's Lounge on Saturday night (9 pm) for a gala celebration.

There will be live music and refreshments as well as a major raffle and a charity auction. Billy Kelly and his committee colleagues have been overwhelmed by the generous support of the local community.

"We've had a lot of excellent auction items donated to us," Billy says. "Everything from a bull to a foal! People have been very generous. We will have two auctioneers. It should be good fun. The proceeds will be split 50/50 between the Roscommon Hunt and the Lecarrow Benevolent Fund Committee. The Lecarrow Committee will be announcing where this year's funds will be spent. We are hoping to install the first defibrillator in the area for example."

While the auction will be an important part of the fund-raising project, there will also be a raffle on the night. Tickets (€2 each/three for €5) are presently on sale. Prizes range from a Hoover Washing Machine to a chainsaw and from a half ton of coal to an evening meal for two.

A sincere thanks from the committee

The Lecarrow Benevolent Fund Committee presently consists of twelve members. This week the committee issued a sincere thank you to everyone who has helped with the planning for Saturday night.

Billy Kelly said: "In particular we want to publicly thank the farmers and landowners who are co-operating so generously regarding the Charity Ride. We are very, very grateful to each of them.

"We also want to thank our various sponsors and everyone who has kindly donated items for the raffle and auction or spot prizes on Saturday night. Without this support from the community we could not proceed with our plans."

The committee chairperson also thanked Roscommon Hunt for hosting the Charity Ride in Lecarrow and expressed his thanks to the public for their support of the raffle.

"We hope everyone in the Lecarrow area and indeed our friends from neighbouring areas comes along to Kelly's and supports this event. It will be a real fun night. The money we raise will help local causes."

The Lecarrow Benevolent Fund Committee consists of: Billy Kelly (chairperson); May Byrne (secretary); Phil Feeley (assistant secretary); Carol Kelly (PRO); Tom Kelly (treasurer); Paddy Shaughnessy (assistant treasurer); George Brennan, Patsy Beades, John Kelly, Paddy Diffley, James Coffey and Gerry Grady.