

# Clarification sought over TK MAXX blow

■ Michael Quinn

Waterford Co Council is to seek clarification from An Bord Pleanála on retail planning guidelines following a setback for a number of major retailers in Tramore and Butlerstown.

Aldi was refused permission for a supermarket in Tramore and the future of the TK MAXX store at the Butlerstown Retail Park is in doubt after attempts to retain its outlet there failed.

The High Court last week refused an application by the company for a judicial review of a Bord Pleanála determination refusing permission to change the use of the store from bulky goods to comparison items.

## Confusion

Director of Services Brian White said there was some confusion regarding bulky goods and comparison goods in respect of the TK MAXX Store and he would write to the Minister and the Dept and look for a review of the retail planning guidelines.

The Butlerstown site was zoned for bulky goods and warehousing. There were some anomalies that

needed to be cleared up in the retail planning guidelines, he said.

Cllr Anne Marie Power (FG) said there had been some unfortunate recent planning decisions by An Bord Pleanála in respect of Tramore. Three high-profile projects that were granted permission by the Co Council were turned down on appeal and the people of Tramore were asking serious questions.

The refusals cost the seaside town millions of euros in capital investment and jobs in the retail and tourism industries. These decisions were detrimental to Tramore and the Council should go back to An Bord Pleanála and ask for more comprehensive reasons for turning them down.

The Aldi supermarket would have reversed "retail leakage" from Tramore which was now the biggest town in the county, she said. It was not possible to build a hotel on the seafront, she asserted, adding that there were no empty retail or industrial units in Tramore.

## 60 jobs involved

Cllr Pat Daly (FF) said 60 jobs were involved in the TK MAXX Store and the company was an anchor tenant for the Retail Park. He was very fearful for the long term future of jobs. The National Retail Strategy should be revisited by the Minister and the Co Council should write to him and get other local authorities to support them, he said.

Cllr Pat Fitzgerald (SF) said An Bord Pleanála was needed to oversee planning in the same way that a police service was necessary to oversee civic society. The board may not always get it right but there was no point in "conning themselves" into believing that the Council and elected members had got every planning decision right in the past either.

## Lying idle

In fact there was plenty of evidence to the contrary such as thousands of empty houses and apartments as well as hundreds of empty retail and industrial units. All these were lying idle in the city and county at a time when thousands were waiting on council housing lists and thousands of children were being taught in prefabricated classrooms.

"In Waterford city and county alone properties worth hundreds if not thousands of millions of euro are lying idle", he added. "We have built too much of what we don't need and not enough of what we do need".

The Dunmore East man said that perhaps An Bord Pleanála could be a little over-cautious, but planning authorities and elected councils from one end of the country to the other had got it seriously wrong in the recent past and because of this the economy was now in ruins.

# New Cosmetic Surgery provider opens in Waterford

An Irish cosmetic surgery provider has opened in Waterford and intends to offer cosmetic surgery services to the South East. River Medical, a Dublin-based clinic, has opened at the Genesis Aesthetic Clinic and intends to provide surgery options such as breast augmentation, reductions and uplifts as well as liposuction, abdominoplasties, face, skin and other procedures for men and women.

Recent research by the group shows that almost 50% of Irish people would not rule out the undergoing some form of cosmetic surgery, while it is believed that over €1m is spent per week in Ireland on cosmetic enhancement, indicating its sheer growth in popularity, even during recessionary times.

Now, the new collaboration between River Medical Group and Genesis Aesthetic Clinic will see surgical options available in the city, offered by specialist-registered plastic surgeon, Labros Chatzis. Mr Chatzis is one of only a handful of surgeons on the Specialist Register of Plastic Surgeons in Ireland and the UK, and holds a PhD in Plastic Surgery. State-of-the-art facilities and highly-trained staff at Genesis mean that patients will be able to have consultations and all aspects of their pre and post operative care locally.



L to R: Dr Tracy Godfrey-Glynn, Kay Power (Clinic Manager), Aileen McDonald (Clinic Manager, River Medical Group), Dr Labros Chatzis (Cosmetic Plastic Surgery).

Speaking about the new clinic, Mr Chatzis said: "We are delighted to be associated with Genesis as their standards and ethos on patient care are very similar to ours; we believe that we can offer people in the South East excellent cosmetic care with confidence."

Meanwhile, Dr Tracy Godfrey

Glynn of Genesis added, "Our patients tell us that they want to change some aspect of their image and now they'll have someone local to talk to. People need to know that they are dealing with someone they can trust and we have invested a significant amount of time and effort to ensure that we

have collaborated with a partner who reflects the high standards of care we offer our own clients" said Dr Godfrey Glynn.

The new clinic, which began accepting consultations can be contacted on 1850 88 50 50 or by visiting www.rivermedical.ie

**WOODLANDS HOTEL**  
WATERFORD

**HELP HAITI**

Woodlands Hotel in association with Haven

**Fund Raising Night**  
Date: Sat 13th of Feb  
Time: 7.30pm  
Live Music

No Reserve Charity Auction  
Buffet Food – Late Bar  
Please Support Haven's Earthquake Appeal and Help us Rebuild Haiti  
Tickets €10.00

# Woodlands Hotel to host charity auction for Haven's work in Haiti

■ Dermot Keyes

This Saturday evening at 7.30pm, a charity auction will be held at The Woodlands Hotel on the Dunmore Road in aid of Haven, the charity which is building homes on the devastated island of Haiti.

"You have to see it to believe it," said Waterford man Eddie Lynch, one of the 260 volunteers who travelled to Haiti last November for its first 'Build It Week', during which 41 homes were constructed. "Now that project was of course conducted before the catastrophic earthquake which, as most of us know by now, has killed at least 200,000 people, injured almost that many again and left one million people homeless."

Eddie added: "The poverty in Haiti is unlike anything I've ever seen anywhere else – South African townships are almost the lap of luxury in comparison to what I saw that week last November."

"These are people who have absolutely nothing. This is a country whose capital, with a population of between two and three million people, which, and this was before the earthquake mind you, doesn't have electricity most of the time."

"It's completely reliant on generators – and when they don't work, there's no running water either."

The week in Haiti, which was the subject of an RTE documentary featuring George Hook which was broadcast on Monday evening last, was an unforgettable experience for Eddie.

"We stayed on the site where we built the homes," said Eddie, reflecting on his time in the village of Ouanaminthe.

"There was a tremendous willingness among our group and the Haitian people that we met were so gracious and so thankful for our help, which was tremendously gratifying."

"The concrete houses that we



Eddie Lynch, pictured in front of some of the homes which Haven has built in the Haitian village of Ouanaminthe.

built stand a much better chance of remaining intact than what many of the homes that the Haitians live in during the hurricane season, so these new houses are making a tremendous difference to their lives."

Interestingly, not a single house constructed by Haven collapsed during last month's seismic disaster.

Saturday night's auction will raise monies for those affected by the Haitian Earthquake, with all funds going to Haven, a charity set up over a year ago by Cork couple Leslie and Carmel Buckley.

Come April, Haven intends to send 250 more volunteers to build the next wave of houses on the Caribbean island, with Eddie set to return to do his part.

"When you hear people talk

about things being bad in Ireland, one visit to Haiti would change anyone's perspective on how hard we actually have it here, recession or otherwise," he said.

"You're talking about people who have absolutely nothing in the material sense and let's face it, materialism is something which a lot of us got tied up during the Celtic Tiger years. What the people of Haiti do have, however, is great pride and dignity, and Haven honours and respects those qualities."

"That's why we'd like to see as many people as possible make it along to The Woodlands on Saturday to support this worthy cause. Tickets are priced at €10 each, and for the price of your ticket you receive buffet food and live music courtesy of The Richie

Roberts Band."

The auction, where items valued between €10 and €200 will be put under the hammer, include a €100 fuel voucher, two All-Ireland Hurling Final tickets and a year-long membership of the Woodlands Leisure Centre.

Tickets can be obtained from reception at the Woodlands, via phone on 051-304574 and can also be bought on the night.

"We have an enjoyable night lined up, and given that there's hardly a greater humanitarian cause in the world right now, I'm confident that we'll have a large turn-out of support, which Haven would be enormously grateful for," said Eddie.

For more on Haven's work in Haiti, log onto www.havenpartnership.com

# Brooks site hotel refusal appealed

■ Jamie O'Keeffe

Waterford City Council's refusal of permission for a hotel, residential and commercial complex on the former Brooks site overlooking the River Suir has been appealed to An Bord Pleanála.

Northern Ireland-based McAleer and Rushe Group were had applied for a mixed-use development on the 1.87-acre Newtown Road site (opposite the People's Park) comprising of 72 apartments, a hotel, commercial/retail units and associated works.

Lodged in December 2008, the proposal involves the demolition of existing industrial sheds and the construction of two blocks: one comprising the apartments and 30,000sq-ft of retail/office space and underground car parking (varying in height from four to nine storeys); and the other (over 3-8 storeys) consisting of a 150-bed hotel and under/above-ground car parking, along with a new entranceway, raised walkways and landscaping.

With Brooks relocating to the Six Cross Roads Business Park, the sale of the site – the rear of which straddles the River Suir – was put on the market with a price tag of around €7million.

While the lands are zoned 'opportunity' under the Waterford City Development Plan, council planners deemed the scale of the proposal to be at odds with its environs, and expressed serious concerns about overlooking and overshadowing.

Also, the development's bulk, height and location "would be overly dominant and intrusive, resulting in an unacceptably adverse impact on the character and ap-



pearance of a number of protected structures in the vicinity, and would potentially have an adverse impact on the designated architectural conservation areas of the south quays."

Furthermore, the proposal's size and layout "would compromise the future development potential of the remaining lands within the opportunity site" and thus "depreciate the value of property in the vicinity."

The case is due to be decided by the appeals board by March 9th.

# O'Shea suggests NAMA savings

Given falling prices in most sectors of the economy, Waterford Labour TD Brian O'Shea has suggested there could be "significant scope for savings" in the operation of National Assets Management Agency through minimising fees and expenses.

Noting that an annual amount of €240 million was foreseen in the draft NAMA business plan, Deputy O'Shea wondered by way of a Dáil question what instructions the Minister for Finance has given to the agency's officials in this regard.

Minister Brian Lenihan said the National Treasury Management Agency has engaged various firms for advice on NAMA and "successful firms priced the work at a substantial discount to win the business". The expenditure to be borne in 2010 include detailed due diligence costs which are recoverable from the participating institutions as part of the valuation process.

Stressing that NAMA's mandate is a commercial



Abbeysider: NAMA chairman Frank Daly

one, Mr Lenihan added: "The purpose of NAMA is to obtain the best achievable financial return for the State and cost containment is and will be a key objective of the Board."

The draft NAMS business plan published last October contains estimates based on aggregate information then available to the interim NAMA team. "I expect that the details published in relation to fees and expenses will be updated in a revised business plan to be prepared by the NAMA Board for publication around mid 2010," the Minister said.

The nine-member NAMA board at the State's 'bad bank' is chaired by Abbeyside man Frank Daly, former head of the Revenue Commissioners, whose most recent role was as a public interest director at Anglo Irish Bank – a position he has now relinquished.

[Jamie O'Keeffe]

# Radio Roddie leads the way for National Dog Walk 2010

Local radio personality Roddie Cleere last week launched Waterford's Charity Dog Walk to raise vital funds for the city and county's 4,131 family carers who provide over 90,000 hours of care each week in the home.

Starting from Petmania on the Tramore Road at 2pm on Easter Monday, April 5th, dog lovers and families alike are welcome to join this fun-filled day and raise funds to support Waterford family carers.

Carers have recently received a 3.9 per cent cut in social welfare payments in Budget 2010 and cut backs in support services across the country, despite saving the State over €2.5 billion per annum.

"The O'Keeffe family, owners of Petmania, have always been hugely supportive of The Carers Association and we are very excited they are sponsoring this event", says

Nuncie Murphy, who manages The Carers' Association Centre in Waterford.

"The walk will begin from Petmania Waterford store and we hope dog lovers and families across the county will join in to raise much needed funds."

Founded by the O'Keeffe family in Kilkenny, Petmania is an Irish owned chain of pet stores with 12 stores nationwide.

As well as supporting the National Dog Walk, since early 2009 Petmania has re-homed over 600 dogs in conjunction with local animal adoption agencies and hosts regular adoption days in-store.

"Petmania sees pets as a central part of family life. Dogs are excellent companions and offer loyal support to their owners," said Petmania's Peter McGrath.

"Petmania's support of the National Dog Walk is a natural fit,



Pictured at the launch of Waterford's Charity Dog Walk last week were Peter McGrath (Petmania Store Manager) Roddy Cleere (WLRfm) and Nuncie Murphy (Carer's Association).

| PHOTO: NOEL BROWNE

which will not only promote the work of The Carers Association and family carers, but highlight the importance of dogs as caring companions in family life."

Many family carers in high-dependency and long-term caring roles can suffer isolation, poor physical and emotional health and

even poverty.

The Carers Association works towards recognition, empowerment and a better quality of life for family carers.

To register for the National Dog Walk, information packs are available in-store - see www.carersireland.com for further details