**News from the PCA**

**Blue Flag and Green Coast Flag for Portmarnock**

How delightful it was to behold two flags fluttering over our Velvet Strand by Thursday 5th June. Not only had we seen the return of the Blue Flag but it was joined this year by a Green Coast Flag! Only 8 beaches in Ireland succeeded in gaining both awards! The Blue Flag is recognition of the excellent water quality as well as fulfilling all the other safety requirements necessary to gain this award.

It was very much a race against the clock to meet the deadline for the flags and make our beach and dunes safe for visitors. Portmarnock coastline had taken a hammering with the winter storms but fortunately was saved the devastation suffered by beaches on the west coast of Ireland. Thanks to the vigilance of our Beach Committee they noticed that the contractors employed by Fingal were depositing soil on our dunes and beach as part of the repair work. Some of this soil had to be removed but the rest was used to fill in behind the sleepers on the revetment. There is still some work to be done in the autumn. Our thanks to FCC workers on the ground for the work they are doing and for continuing to liaise with our Beach Committee.

Soil is not suitable for dunes as it will not support dune grasses and would eventually lead to their disappearance. The grasses hold the sand dunes together. Some are salt tolerant and can endure whatever the waves throw at them. Marram can grow through the sand deposited by the wind and develop long root systems from which they can regenerate thus creating tall dunes. Human pressure on the dunes speeds up their breakdown. This is the reason why we ask people and sports teams not to use the dunes for training or exercise. The dunes also support a vast array of flowers coming into bloom at different times of the year. Butterflies and bees thrive on the nectar from these flowers.

The Green Coast Flag is awarded as recognition of local community input. It is a symbol of environmental excellence and has been established to acknowledge, promote and protect the beaches throughout all of Ireland and Wales. Our Beach Committee as well as our volunteers who do a fortnightly clean-up of beach and dunes throughout the summer and autumn can take credit for this award. We are grateful to the management and staff of Portmarnock Hotel and Golf Links for supporting our efforts.

**Happy Holidays!**

We wish all in our community a very happy holiday be they at home or away. Let’s hope the sun keeps shining us like last year glorious summer!!

**Contacting the PCA**

**If you have concerns about issues in our community why not contact us. Mobile 087 3858254.Email:** **portmarnock1@gmail.com****. Website: www.portmarnock.org**