**News from the PCA**

**Concerns about Sewage Plant**

It is of the utmost importance that our community be fully aware of the of the impact of the proposed sewage plant at Clanshaugh on our community. The PCA has already made a submission outlining our concerns to the Greater Dublin Drainage Project team .The following are our main concerns as outlined by one of the scientific members from the committee:

* **Tertiary Treatment**: The proposed plant will only treat all sewage and sludge from counties Meath, Kildare and Dublin to secondary treatment level. This means that the vast amount of sewage will only have filtration and settling beds as well as sedimentation applied to them. The effluent, while it may achieve minimum international standards will still contain large amounts of phosphorous, bacteria, coliforms, viruses and bacteriophages. The effluent will in no way resemble drinking water quality. To save money, the proposed plant doesn’t have plans to include tertiary treatment, which seek to kill bacteria and viruses before they are released into the environment. We must demand such a tertiary treatment if this plant goes ahead
* **Adequate Research into Sewage Effluent and Sludge**: In many countries the pellets formed from solid sludge are used to fertilise the land used for industrial building, but are disallowed for crops and agricultural land for fear of heavy metals, dioxins and micro pollutants. Adequate research has not been carried out into the health risks resulting from such sludge fertilizer.
* **Outfall into SAC candidate Sandbank**: The outfall from the sewage plant will be one kilometre off Irelands Eye. This is an extensive sandbank, with a very rich inververtebrate population and biodiversity. It is a shellfish area and licences to trawl for razor fish are granted at certain times of the year. In 2012 Ireland applied for SAC status as part of the Natura 2000, for the Rocabill to Dalkey Island sandbank, with specific aims to protect the Harbour Porpoise, which occurs in higher numbers in this location than around the coastline. Effluent from a Giant Sewage Plant must not be allowed to endanger this ecologically sensitive sandbank.
* **Tunnelling**: Tunnelling will go under the Baldoyle Estuary, an SAC which is legally protected. No engineering works or disturbance may occur within 100 meters of a SAC. It is difficult to imagine how tunnelling may be achieved without disturbance as there is a borehole proposed along Golf Links Rd, which would also be illegal.
* **Blue Flag Beaches**: Blue Flag status for Ireland’s beaches is very necessary for the regeneration of our tourist industry. The beaches of Fingal would be in grave danger of never again achieving Blue Flag status. Recent storms and easterly winds remind us that noxious effluent would be washed up on our beautiful recreational coastline and beaches

**Portmarnock Tidy Towns**

The inaugural meeting took place on Monday 20th January in Portmarnock Hotel and Golf Links. A decision was taken to enter the Tidy Towns Competition in 2014. Members felt it would be good to get a representative from some other Tidy Towns groups to address the committee so as to be informed about the best practice in entering the competition. Portmarnock is in need of an urgent facelift. FCC has committed to giving €5000 to the project. There is an urgent need to get somebody with drive and determination to head up our committee. More volunteers are also needed. So why not contact us at our email or by phone. There will be a meeting of the committee on the third Monday of each month. **If interested Tel .087617855 or email:portmarnock1@gmail.com**

**PCA meeting with TY Students**

A deputation from the PCA spoke to Transition Year students in the school on Tuesday 28th January. The main purpose of the meeting with TY students was to familiarise them with the history and work of the PCA in the community since its foundation in 1976. Portmarnock Community School was set up in 1979. It was pointed out the we have grown together over the past 40 years. The school has been an integral part of the community since its foundation and were complimented on their outstanding academic record as well the broad range of extra-curricular activities provided for the students. The volunteer work done by the school In South Africa and more recently in Lesotho was as highly praised. The vast majority of the students live in Portmarnock and it was pointed out to them that it was in their interest to become engaged in what is happening in our community be it environmental or otherwise. They were informed about the proposed the Greater Dublin Drainage Project with the outflow from the sewage under the Baldoyle estuary. The UPROAR campaign against the parallel runway was also highlighted. The students were urged to take a more active part in improving our community in every way possible. A fifth year student from the school has volunteered to manage our website. We are confident that the PCA and the Community School will continue to work in close cooperation from now on.

**Damage to our Beach and Dunes**

Members of our committee met with reps from FCC to survey the terrible damage done to our beach and dunes by the winter storms.FCC have undertaken to replace the sleepers that were torn away by the storm and set them at an an angle of 60 degrees rather than vertical which they had done previously. We lost over six metres of dunes as well as the metal stakes that had been installed previously. Our representatives also pointed out to FCC that Sea buck Thorn was not a suitable shrub to plant on the dunes as it was alien to this environment. We would like to remind families that the band stand should be avoided when storms and high tides are prevalent. The stand is an old structure and could easily collapse with the pressure of gale force winds and high tides

**Contacting the PCA**

Again we wish remind readers if they have issues that need to be addressed or suggestions for enhancing our community to contact us at our email: **portmarnock1@gmail.com**