

PRESS RELEASE

Clean Beaches – its Child’s Play

Schools from Ballyboughal and Mulhuddart Take Part in Blue Flag Environmental Activities

June 21st Portmarnock beach – Ballyboughal NS

June 28th Portrane beach – Ladyswell NS

Two Fingal beaches, The Brook, Portrane and Portmarnock beach were awarded the prestigious Blue Flag award for 2011 by Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan. Speaking at the awards Minister Hogan said, “The increase in the number of blue flags in 2011 is very welcome and is due to the combined efforts of the Local Authorities and coastal communities on the ground as well as those in the wider catchment who are playing their part in working to improve water quality.”

The Blue Flag is one of the world’s most recognised eco-labels. The 82 Irish beaches and 2 marinas that have achieved this accolade met a specific set of criteria related to water quality, information provision, environmental education and beach management. As a pre-requisite, the bathing water at Blue Flag beaches must meet the highest standards of bathing water quality. The numbers of Blue Flags awarded in Ireland this year has increased by eight on 2010 making the number of Blue Flags awarded reach an all time record high. Two flags were awarded to County Dublin in 2011, both of which are in Fingal.

As part of the strict criteria for the award, some Environmental Education activities must take place at the beach. The children from Ballyboughal National School were awarded their first An Taisce Green Flag on the litter and waste theme at a ceremony in Croke Park on the 25th May last. Further demonstrating their commitment to protecting the environment, students Fingal County Council’s Environment Department and asked if they could be involved in one of the environmental activities at a Blue Flag beach. On the 21st June a group from Ballyboughal NS travelled to Portmarnock beach and carried out an extensive clean-up on the beach to preserve the natural beach habitat. Fingal County Council is also delighted to facilitate children from Ladyswell NS Mulhuddart to attend a

beach-clean up at Portrane beach on Tuesday 28th June next, as part of their Green Schools activities.

“Children attending schools with Green Flags are committed environmentalists, it is a very positive indication of how our young people care for their environment by becoming actively involved in a clean-up like this. This year’s example shows that schools from across the county recognise that our beaches are a wonderful amenity for all citizens of Fingal” said PJ Howell, Director of Services.

While Blue Flags were only awarded to Portmarnock and Portrane beaches this year, it is hoped on completion of water treatment facilities works, that all beaches in Fingal will eventually achieve the Blue Flag award. Fingal County Council, along with An Taisce, urge the public to help retain Blue Flags at beaches in Fingal by doing some simple things when visiting the beach. Don’t litter, respect fragile dunes, keep dogs under effectual control and clean up after your dog.

ENDS 23/06/11

For further information please contact Florence White Communications Officer 01-890 5998 or 087 414 1580 / email Florence.white@fingalcoco.ie

Or Ann Murphy Assistant Communications Officer 01-870 4453 or 087 990 8470 or email ann.murphy@fingalcoco.ie