

## Press Release

### *Minister Jimmy Deenihan meets and greets Heritage Officers in Killarney*

Minister Jimmy Deenihan recently met with twenty two of the country's Local Authority Heritage Officers for the first time since his appointment as Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht earlier this year. The meeting, held in Killarney on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July, was an informative and beneficial gathering for all.

Heritage Officers from as far afield as Donegal and Louth County Councils, travelled to Kerry to meet the new Minister, including Fingal's Heritage Officer, Dr. Gerry Clabby. After formal introductions the Minister addressed the group tracing his interest in heritage over the years and outlining his vision for heritage under his Ministry. Minister Deenihan spoke about the need to continue engaging local communities in heritage initiatives; develop a closer synergy between heritage and the arts and for all stakeholders to acknowledge and promote heritage as a vital national asset underpinning Ireland's culture, tourism and economy.

Heritage Officers from Fingal, South Tipperary, Wicklow, Donegal and of course Kerry, then showcased projects facilitated by the heritage office in their respective counties. Dr. Clabby spoke on the importance of a proactive approach, saying "Fingal places huge emphasis on positive action for heritage, for example through the Heritage Plan, and supporting heritage activity in the community. Our innovative green infrastructure strategy is embedded in the County Development Plan 2011-2017, with themes ranging from Biodiversity, Parks Open Spaces & Recreation, Sustainable Water Management, Archaeological and Architectural Heritage, and Landscape Green identified and mapped." He continues "The Council's policy and objectives in relation to green infrastructure recognise that the creation of a connected and multifunctional green infrastructure will yield economic and social benefits as well as the more obvious environmental benefits for Fingal."

The meeting concluded with the Minister acknowledging the important role Heritage Officers play in facilitating a heritage service within local government and local communities.

Minister Deenihan expressed his intention to travel around the country over the next couple of weeks to meet with the key partners; community groups and other stakeholders involved in heritage and arts initiatives at a county level.

**ENDS 12/08/11**

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Heritage Week 2011**

Heritage Week 2011 takes place from Saturday 20th August until Sunday 28 August at locations nationally. Events are listed at [www.heritageweek.ie](http://www.heritageweek.ie), and a list of events in Fingal can be found at [www.fingalcoco.ie](http://www.fingalcoco.ie)

### **Heritage Council**

The Heritage Council was established as a statutory body under the Heritage Act, 1995. It takes an integrated approach to heritage, with responsibilities that include both its cultural and natural aspects. The Heritage Act provides a definition of 'heritage' — and its breadth is truly comprehensive. It includes monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects such as art and industrial works, documents and genealogical records, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens, parks and inland waterways. The Heritage Council has a particular responsibility to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in the national heritage.

### **Heritage Officer Programme**

The Heritage Council has developed a network of twenty-eight Heritage Officers who are employed in Local Authorities with financial and technical support from the Heritage Council. The Heritage Officer Programme provides a professional, co-ordinated and strategic heritage service at City and County level. Heritage Officers influence the policies and activities of Local Authorities who are themselves the primary influencers on heritage at local level.