

## PRESS RELEASE – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

### Major Tourism Jobs and Investment Boost for North Dublin

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012:** Mayor of Fingal Councillor Gerry McGuire and Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Mr. Leo Varadkar T.D. today officially marked the start of the new €10 million Malahide Castle and Gardens Redevelopment Project, with a stone plaque unveiling and tree planting ceremony. The ceremony symbolised the beginning of construction works, and anticipated future growth in visitor numbers to the Castle, Gardens and parkland.

This €10million Redevelopment Project is jointly funded by Fingal County Council (€6.25million) and Failte Ireland (€3.75million) and is currently the council's largest investment project, and one of the largest tourism investment initiatives in the country. Up to 100 jobs are supported in the construction phase. When open, an additional 80 jobs will be provided, and a new operator for the tourism facilities which will be appointed shortly which will provide further employment opportunities in the near future.

The new-look Malahide Castle and Gardens will be re-opened to the public in June 2012, and visitors may look forward to enhanced tourist facilities including a new Castle Tour, the unique Walled Talbot Botanical Gardens, Extensive Parkland and Playground. Avoca will be operating the café and retail offerings on site.

Speaking at the ceremony, Fingal County Manager Mr. David O'Connor said "Today shows that local authorities can lead large tourism development projects and be a catalyst for economic development and job creation. Innovative use of publicly owned land and buildings can bring a huge economic dividend to local areas and provide significant value for money to the taxpayer." He added "Creating employment opportunities and economic activity in Fingal is the number one priority, and a new and better Malahide Castle and Gardens will be the result of action taken by the County Council to meet that need."

Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport Leo Varadkar said: "This is a great development which will significantly enhance the existing tourism facilities in Malahide Castle &

Gardens, and which is expected to attract 250,000 visitors per year. I very much welcome the job creation aspect. I understand it includes 100 jobs during the construction phase, and an additional 80 jobs at Avoca which will run the café and retail services. A new operator for the tourism facilities will provide further job opportunities. This Government will continue to support capital investment in tourism in order to create jobs, remain competitive and attract more visitors from overseas.”

Mayor of Fingal, Cllr. Gerry McGuire said “The new ‘Malahide Castle & Gardens’ will cater for in excess of a quarter of a million visitors to the Demesne each year, both overseas and Irish tourists, as well as many locals from Malahide and surrounding areas who avail of this marvellous heritage facility on their doorstep.

The Mayor added “This project has the potential to be an inspiring success in difficult times. Once it’s opened we expect demand for what’s on offer to be very high, reflecting the very attractive location and the state-of-the-art facilities that will be available. At an extremely challenging time for all our citizens, 100 jobs are already being supported during the construction phase and a similar number of jobs will be supported once the Castle and Gardens re-open for business.”

The Mayor thanked all those present for their support in getting this project underway and gave particular mention to the interdepartmental project team from Fingal County Council. He also thanked Failte Ireland for the funding they are providing to the redevelopment, and the Minister for his support for this project, and finally thanked the local community for embracing the redevelopment and for supporting a project that the community in Malahide can be justifiably proud of.

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### Editors Notes:

- A €10 million investment is being made in this Redevelopment Project, with **Fingal County Council investing €6.25million**, and Failte Ireland investing €3.75 million.
- Malahide Castle and Gardens is due to be relaunched in June 2012. The Construction phase will be completed in April and the fit-out phase will finish in May.
- Up to **100 jobs** will be supported in the construction of the facilities. An additional **80 jobs** are to be provided by AVOCA who will run the café and retail offerings on site. A new operator for the tourism facilities will provide further employment opportunities in the near future.
- Malahide Castle & Gardens will cater for in excess of a quarter of a million visitors who visit the Demesne each year.
- Trips to Ireland for the first eleven months of 2011 were up by 6.8 % compared to the corresponding period in 2010. There were 6,001,100 overseas visits to Ireland during the eleven-month period.

### **Construction Works**

- Malahide Castle and Gardens is set in over 250 acres of parkland close to the seaside town of Malahide. During refurbishment works the grounds of the wider Demesne continue to remain open to the general public. All the other facilities including pitches, Cricket Pavillion, the pitch & putt course, the childrens playground, and the extensive 270 acres of regional parkland and are all still accessible and will remain so throughout the works. Significant progress has been made on construction works over the past few months, assisted by the mild weather conditions this winter.
- The installation of extensive underground service ducts is complete and the contractors are busy reinstating the road surfaces which were excavated to facilitate this phase of the project. As part of these works an underground rainwater harvesting tank has been installed 2 meters below ground in the old Coach Park. This tank, which is equivalent in size to a tennis court, will provide irrigation for the botanical gardens.
- The old buildings have been stripped out and re-slating in salvaged natural slate has commenced. Foundations have also been laid for the new-build element of

the project and construction of the steel superstructure began within the last few weeks.

- Repairs and fit-out works within the castle building itself are scheduled to begin this month and the anticipated completion date for the entire project is June 2012.
- Ground works began last Summer (2011)