Press Release

March 17, 2018

**Big attendances at St Patrick's Day celebrations across Fingal**

Large numbers braved the cold weather to attend the St Patrick's Day parades held across Fingal today. Fingal County Council organised parades in Swords, Blanchardstown and Balbriggan while local groups arranged parades in Skerries, Lusk and Rush.

Approximately 12,000 people attended the Balbriggan Parade, 20,000 attended the Swords Parade and 12,000 attended the Blanchardstown Parade. A further 15,000 attended the parades in Skerries, Lusk and Rush.

There were a wide variety of community and volunteer groups taking part in the parades across the county. Over 2,000 people participated in the Swords and Blanchardstown Parades while 1,200 took part in the Balbriggan Parade.

Fingal County Council Chief Executive Paul Reid said: “I would like to commend all those who took part in the parades and celebrations across the county and thank our Events team, the volunteers and community groups who worked together to organise all of this year’s festivities. Today was reflective of the strong sense of community and culture that exists across Fingal.”

Including the six parades and events taking place in the Seamus Ennis Centre, Malahide Castle, Ardgillan Castle and the Dublin Bay Prawn Festival in Howth, more than 100,000 people will attend St Patrick's Day celebrations across Fingal this weekend.

Onlookers were entertained by the variety of floats at each parade today with 300 local community groups and 100 local businesses taking part. 150 members of St Finian’s GAA club dressed up as yellow minions from the film Despicable
Me during the Swords Parade while 150 members from the North Dakota State University Marching Band took part in the Swords and Blanchardstown parades. 500 members of the Fingallians GAA club also took part in the Swords parade.

Fingal's retail and hospitality industry will also benefit from this weekend as local business usually see on average a 70% increase in footfall as people attend the celebrations.

Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Mary McCamley said: “I am extremely grateful to the Events Team as well as the community and volunteer groups and who have contributed hugely to the St Patrick's Day festivities. Fingal has one of the youngest and most diverse populations in the country so this weekend is a great opportunity for people of all backgrounds to connect with their communities and celebrate Fingal's rich culture and heritage.”

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For further information, please contact press@fingal.ie

PHOTO: One of the floats from today's parade in Swords.