

New Gaelscoil will embody sustainable design principles.

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At a well attended meeting of parents and public representatives at the Grand Hotel Tramore, on Thursday last the 26th of February, plans to develop a new Gaelscoil at Crobally Upper were outlined by Fintan Duffy and Harry Bent of dhb Architects, Broad St. Waterford.

Efforts by the Board of Management to engage with the Department of Education and Science to progress a building project have been frustrated by bureaucratic delay and has led to a unique initiative by the school community to replace their prefabs with a proper state of art building on its scenic site off the racecourse roundabout Tramore.

Parents were dismayed to hear the latest response from the DES that no indicative timeframe could be given in relation to the progression of their school project. This was in response to a series of parliamentary questions by all local TD's and Senators including Paudie Coffey who addressed assembled parents offering his support to their project. All members of Tramore town council have similarly pledged their full backing for the Gaelscoil's cause. Principal Daithí de Paor noted that he had received apologies from Brendan Kenneally TD, Minister Martin Cullen TD and Brian O Shea TD. John Deasy TD was represented by Ben Power.

In a stimulating presentation by the project architects, dhb, unique examples of excellent school designs from all around the world were shown and the compared to the unsustainable prefab complex currently occupying the Gaelscoil site. Quoting international research by the Gaia group, Harry Bent stated that "One study found that in classrooms with the most daylighting, students' learning progressed 20% faster in math and 26% faster in reading than similar students in classrooms with the least daylighting".

Outlining plans to appoint a building liaison committee to consult with their firm in drawing up specific site plans dhb Architects will endeavour in their design to "...minimise adverse social, environmental and economic impacts by being efficient to operate, effective in their use of resources, minimizing waste and pollution and protecting occupant health and the wider environment during construction, operation,

re-use and at the end of their useful life..... enhance positive social and economic impacts by providing an environment that is fit for purpose, more responsive to individual, business and community needs and aspirations, more flexible and functional, maintainable and cheaper to run, and more respectful of the environment on which we all ultimately depend.

Stan Nangle, as Chairman of Tramore Development Trust, spoke of their keen interest integrating a community facility with the Gaelscoil's building project. Tramore Development Trust with Waterford Leader Partnership have access to funds earmarked for providing community halls and facilities. Based on precedents in Fingal area of Co. Dublin both projects can be built and run concurrently benefitting the whole community.

While frustration with the Department was voiced by many speakers there was overwhelming optimism that a community initiative will cut through the red tape, save tax payers money and give pupils attending the Gaelscoil the opportunity to spend their school days in a school building.

Mar a dúirt Daithí de Paor, Príomhoide, “tá ár litreacha go dtí an Roinn mar thonnta ag bualadh ar thrá thréigthe. Ta sé in am an Aire Oideachais is Eolaiochta a bhualadh le súnamí ó phobal na Trá Móire. Má cheaptar go bhfuil an faillí déanta go dtí seo ar infrastructúir oideachais an bhaile seo maithte anois go bhfuil dhá togra togála le tosnú ag an Roinn i mbliana tá an dallmhullóg ar an Aire Batt O Keefe. Ni féidir scoil a fhágaint gan foirgneamh chomh fada linne go háirithe nuair is féidir freastal ar cheantair eile laistigh de bhliain mar atá déanta i mBaile Áth Cliath. Tá an Ghaelscoil ag éileamh cothrom na féinne.”



An example of an outdoor classroom space shown by dhb Architects to assembled parents of Gaelscoil Philib Barún.