



MICHAEL McNAMARA TD

WORKING FOR ENNIS

EDUCATION IN ENNIS

Education is the bedrock of any community and the construction of new schools is an important investment in the future of Ennis and the surrounding area. During the last four and a half years investment has continued in our schools, despite the economic challenges this Government inherited. I am happy to have worked closely with school communities in Ennis to ensure that much of that investment came to Clare, and indeed Ennis.

Following on from the successful opening of the new Ennis National School building, it was announced in October that three new primary school buildings and one new post primary school building would be built in the town within the next three years, and further upgrading and extensions in other schools would also be completed.



Photo by Natasha Barton

ENNIS NATIONAL SCHOOL

I was delighted to accompany my colleague, then Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn, to the official opening of Ennis National School in May 2014. Despite the huge challenges in the economy at the time, education was prioritised and this €6.7 million primary school building was opened on a green field site in a working partnership between the Department, the Board of Management, and school community.



The new state of the art two storey building has 32 classrooms, with large hall, changing rooms, and ancillary accommodation, and will serve generations of children in Ennis for years to come.

ENNIS CHRISTIAN BROTHERS SCHOOL

Ennis CBS is one of the many schools in the town dealing with overcrowding, less than adequate emergency prefabs and being forced to turn away potential students every year. Working closely with school management, lobbying the Minister for Education and setting up meetings, I am now satisfied that a major and much needed extension for this busy school is to go to construction in 2017. The school has been providing education to the children of Ennis for more than 180 years and the announcement earlier this year that it is one of the three local primary schools included in the Schools Capital Plan further secures its future.

ENNIS EDUCATE TOGETHER

Ennis Educate Together was the third Ennis primary school to get the green light as part of the 2015 School Capital Plans year, and will begin construction in 2018. The school on the Gort Road, requires a permanent, secure base and a new school building will provide just that. I will continue to work with the school management and school community in securing a suitable site in time for this work to begin.

RICE COLLEGE

Post Primary buildings in the county have come under a lot of pressure in the past decade, with a growing population and an increase in the subjects being provided requiring more space and rooms. Rice College, Ennis, is currently working towards a much needed extension for the school, having already purchased extra land to extend its site. The application for the extension is currently under consideration by the Department of Education. I am well aware of the need for this extension and will continue to press upon both the Department and the Minister for Education the urgent need for a positive decision on this project.

SCOIL CHRIOST RI

Scoil Christ Ri in Cloughleigh is a school that is providing a huge service to the local community, often in very constraining conditions. I pointed out this fact to Tánaiste Joan Burton when she visited the school this year. Again, the hard work of the board of management, school management and staff paid off and went a long way to securing a new building which will begin construction in 2017. Plans are already in place for two new classrooms which will become the entrance to the new school building in 2017.



ENNIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Construction is to begin at Ennis Community College also by 2017. A much needed extension will allow the school to grow and expand on the town centre campus. This second level school has a long and proud history of providing an inclusive and co-educational experience for all of its students. Ennis Community College is co-located with Ennis College of Further Education and Gaelcholáiste an Chláir, Clare's only Irish-medium secondary school.

ST FLANNAN'S COLLEGE

St Flannan's College is the town's largest secondary school having expanded its enrolment to more than 1,000 students. As the pupil numbers grow so too has the campus with new extensions and buildings. However the original school which began construction in 1879 has required upgrading in the last number of years. I was delighted therefore when the school was awarded funding for the much needed upgrade of its roof as part of the Summer Work Scheme.

ESTATES BILL WILL ENSURE HOUSING ESTATES TAKEN IN CHARGE.

Now that the country's finances are improving, I will ensure all housing estates are taken into charge within the next five years.

In October I introduced a Bill to the Dáil that will significantly reduce the delay and complexities in having housing estates taken in charge by Local Authorities. The introduction of Local Property Tax puts an onus on the local authority to provide a complete range of services for tax payers such as roads, open spaces and car parks, while Irish Water should take charge of sewage, water mains and service connections and ensure that they function properly.

The Planning and Development (Taking in Charge of Estates) Bill 2015, which I have drafted and introduced, requires the Council and Irish Water to do just that.

FREE GP CARE

I believe these moves to ensure free care to the youngest and oldest in our society is a move in the right direction

As many as 3,900 Clare children under the age of six are in receipt of free GP care, with 96 per cent of local doctors signing up for the scheme.

As part of Budget 2016, Free GP care is to be extended to children under the age of 12. This move must be welcomed, especially by young families who worry about not being able to afford a visit to the doctor when their child falls ill.

Free care is also being provided to all those over 70 years of age.



ENNIS FLOOD RELIEF

Despite the horrific winter flooding experienced by many in our county in December, the two Ennis Flood Relief Schemes introduced to date have worked well.

Clare County Council is on record as stating that the extensive works which have been carried out in the town since the last major flooding event of 2009, "saved Ennis" during the most recent down pour.

I am aware that there are still flooding issues in some part of the town and its environs, including Tobartaoscaín, the Turnpike and St. Flannan's College, and I will be pressing the Minister for State with responsibilities for the OPW to honour his commitment that further flood relief works will begin this year in Ennis to rectify this matter.



Photo by Gary Collins Photography

There is no denying that the almost five years since the last election have been painful for almost all in our society. However the pain has not been without purpose, and despite a turbulent economy, I was happy to work to ensure investment in the infrastructure of Ennis.

I am grateful for the support I received from the people of Ennis in the last election and during my time as a back bench TD. I have done my best to improve the quality of life for you the constituent. At times that has resulted in my removal from the Dáil and indeed expulsion from my own parliamentary party, but I will continue to work hard to implement change, irrespective of the bureaucracy and lack of Government reform that often frustrates me.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a happy, healthy and prosperous 2016.



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