

Michael McNamara TD WORKING FOR SHANNON



The four years since the last election have been painful for almost all in our society. However the pain has not been without purpose. As a people we are beginning to rebuild our country and hope is being restored. The progress is very slow, certainly slower than I would like, but we are moving in the right direction.

Unemployment is down by more than 13% in the Shannon region in the last year. Companies are beginning to invest in the area again and employment is steadily increasing.

Budget 2015 has meant that many people are finally seeing a small increase in their take home pay and their children's allowance. I believe that we must progress with each budget and continue to give back to the people who have paid a high price for the recovery of an economy that was decimated four years ago.

I am grateful for the support I received from the people of Shannon in the last election and during my time as a back bench TD. I have done my best to improve the facilities in Shannon for its people, and will continue to do so.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McNamara".



INVESTING IN SHANNON'S SCHOOLS

Planning permission and funding has been granted to St Patrick's Comprehensive School for a major extension.

This new two-storey extension will increase the second level education capacity in Shannon and provide state of the art facilities for students.

The building is to accommodate a special needs unit, general purpose area, engineering room, lecture room, art room, science laboratory, music room, home economics room, multi-media room and business/computer room, while there will be other site works including a new site entrance, car parking and set down area, as well as a hard court and hurling wall area.

The green light for the expansion of the second level school follows on from the new extension at St Aidan's Primary School which was officially opened last June. This was the first permanent extension to the school since it was opened more than 30 years ago.

The new extension which consisted of a main stream classroom, two resource rooms, staff toilets and an extended car park is providing more comfortable facilities for the 268 pupils and their teachers.

We are now at the early pre-planning stages for a permanent school building for Gaelscoil Donncha Rua. The architectural planning phase is expected to begin soon and I am happy to lend my support to the project.



€52,000 FOR LOCAL SPORTS CLUBS

The work carried out by the sport and leisure clubs in a community are invaluable, and while we cannot repay the hard work, dedication and generosity of the volunteers who maintain these clubs and associations, we must continue to support their efforts.

Last year the Sports Capital Programme provided €52,000 to sporting bodies in Shannon.

A total of €45,000 was awarded to the Shannon Athletic Club, while a further €7,000 was awarded to Park Rangers Ltd.

The Sports Capital Programme (SCP) is operated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and provides grants to assist in the development of sports facilities and the provision of sports equipment.

I would encourage all sports organisations in Shannon to continue to avail of this funding, and I am happy to work with sport's bodies from the Shannon area on any applications they may wish to submit in the future.

TREES PLANTED AFTER STORM DAMAGE

The hundreds of trees damaged and destroyed during the unprecedented January 2014 storms are finally being replaced in Shannon.

It is heartening to see the tree planting programme taking place following months of campaigning.

Unfortunately the matter was not sufficiently addressed up to now. I raised the issue continuously with the Minister for Public Expenditure Brendan Howlin, and the CEO of Clare County Council Tom Coughlan, and I have also been in continuous contact with the Department of the Environment on the matter.

However work has now begun on planting 900 trees.



AER LINGUS AND SHANNON

Shannon International Airport has provided direct and indirect employment to the region for decades. It is therefore essential that everything possible is done at Government level to protect the future of Shannon airport.

Once again the future development of the airport is under the microscope as IAG bids for Aer Lingus. While I believe that the sale of 75% of Aer Lingus by Fianna Fáil in 2006 was a mistake we must now focus on what to do with the remaining 25% for the betterment of the country and the Shannon region.

This Government must promote regional development in Ireland. Aer Lingus has contributed to that in the past and continues to do so now. There are transatlantic flights coming into Shannon which are of vital importance to the tourist industry in Clare and across the west coast of Ireland. These transatlantic flights and the flights in and out of London Heathrow are also vital for industrial connectivity. Just a few weeks ago AMAX senior management confirmed to me that one of their main reasons for opening their European hub in Shannon, was the airports connectivity.

Aer Lingus is more than a share price, it is vital to balanced regional development and the continued investment into the Shannon region. I will insist on knowing IAG and Aer Lingus's plans for Shannon before I vote on the matter in the Dáil. I also welcome your input on the issue so please feel free to contact me at michael.mcnamara@oireachtas.ie.



UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES DOWN

Unemployment figures in Shannon are finally dropping – not as quickly as I would like, but I am happy to see some movement in the right direction.

There has been a 10.65% fall in unemployment in Co. Clare in the last year.

The Shannon-Ennis area in particular has witnessed one of the biggest falls nationally with a drop of 13.88% recorded for this area between January 2014 and January 2015. A significant drop in both the live register figures and the number of people emigrating, all points to significant job growth in the region.

In the last six months we have seen companies like Element Six adding to their workforce and other companies choosing Shannon as their European base.

In January AMAX, manufacturer of data centre and cloud computing solutions, opened their European manufacturing facility in Shannon creating 100 new jobs.

Element Six announced a major €25 million expansion in December with the addition of 40 new engineering jobs.

Each week many companies, both national and international, working inside the Shannon Free Zone are quietly employing more people and creating new jobs.



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