

November 20, 2009

Comhairle Gives Young Limerick People A Voice

Filed in TechnologyPoliticsConferences & Industry Exhibitions on November 20, 2009

The Comhairle, which is part of a programme being run by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, is a local forum for young people where they can discuss local and national issues of relevance to them.

Delegates - representing Schools, Youth Projects, Youthreach, Voluntary Youth Clubs and Special Interest Groups throughout the County - this year chose to discuss the issues of "Alcohol and Drugs" and "Internet Safety and Social Networking Sites". They also nominated 21 of their fellow delegates to a newly developed County Limerick Youth Council.

The Council, which will meet six times a year and is supported by Limerick Youth Service, will give members the opportunity to raise matters that concern them with the relevant authorities and agencies, in particular to liaise and consult with Limerick County Council, the County Limerick Youth Affairs Sub-Committee and others, on issues of relevance to young people. The Council members will also nominate students to represent the County at Dail na nÓg or "Youth Parliament" in March when Comhairlí representatives from 34 local authority areas around the country convene in Dublin.

Addressing delegates today, Councillor David Naughton, Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council said: "Since its foundation in 2002, Limerick County Comhairle na nÓg has seen a steady increase in its membership which is a tribute to those who coordinate it and continue to develop the initiative."

He added: "The Comhairle is a wonderful opportunity for young people to contribute to making things better for themselves and their communities. I am delighted to see that Comhairle na nÓg is increasingly being recognised by local, regional and national bodies, which proves that the process is effective and does make a difference to the lives of young people."

Councillor Naughton congratulated those involved in organising Limerick County Comhairle na nÓg, including the staff of Limerick County Council's community and enterprise section along with the Limerick County Development Board; Jackie Dwane, youth officer with County Limerick VEC; Maurice Walsh and his team from Limerick Youth Service; and the Facilitators and Note takers who assisted delegates in preparing their presentations."

Speaking following Comhairle na nÓg 2009, Ms Josephine Cotter Coughlan, Director of Services stated: "The Community and Enterprise section of Limerick County Council, the Limerick County Development Board and other bodies throughout the County are very aware of the importance of considering the opinions of younger members of the community when devising local or national policy. In recent years, the input and opinions of local Comhairle delegates have helped to formulate national policies affecting the lives of young people. On a local level, Limerick County Council has developed many policies with substantial input from children and young people."

Commenting on the theme of "Alcohol and Drugs", Ms. Cotter Coughlan stated: "Alcohol and drug misuse can have a devastating impact on individuals, families and entire communities. It is one of the biggest issues facing Irish society and, therefore, it is important that every member of society has their say on how it should be handled."

On the issue of "Internet Safety and Social Networking Sites", Ms. Cotter Coughlan said there was no mistaking the many risks arising from new communication technologies becoming a part of the daily life of children.

Irish Press Releases

“In recent years - through the widespread use of email, social networking sites and instant messaging - we have witnessed how the anonymous and far reaching communication capabilities of the Internet have brought a new dimension to child protection issues. In this context, I am delighted that Comhairle delegates have empowered themselves to determine, understand and manage the risks associated with the internet and social networking sites. Nevertheless, it is critical to emphasise that the Internet has a very positive influence on the lives of young people in Ireland”, she added.

In recent years, children and young people from every part of County Limerick have discussed a variety of issues, including anti-social behaviour in the community, the way future recreation facilities and youth cafes will be developed and managed; and the development of playgrounds.

Further information on Limerick County Comhairle na nÓg is available from the Community and Enterprise section of Limerick County Council on 061-496000. For more on Dáil na nÓg log on to www.dailnanog.ie.

-ENDS-

Dunphy Public Relations

Connolly, Ennis, Co Clare, IRELAND

(Tel) 00353-868534900; (Fax) 00353-6839692; (Skype) [dunphypr](https://www.skype.com/name/dunphypr); (Email) media@dunphypr.com

www.dunphypr.com; www.dunphyprimages.com; www.twitter.com/dunphypr