

The Fenian

Sinn Féin

Guth na Phoblachta

Dublin South-West Sinn Féin, St. Dominics Shopping Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Tel: 4149063 Fax: 4149103 email: scrowe@sdublincoco.ie mdaly@sdublincoco.ie

ASTHMA SURVEY SHOCK

Crowe calls for Government health probe into high asthma levels

TALLAGHT SINN FÉIN Councillor Seán Crowe has called on Health Minister Micheál Martin to launch a comprehensive study into the high incidence of asthma and bronchitis among children living close to the Cement Roadstone site in West Tallaght.

A survey conducted of 184 homes in the Brookview, Kilcarrig and Kilmartin estates by Sinn Féin over recent weeks has revealed that 102 families had asthma or other bronchial problems.

The average rate for asthma in Ireland (which has a higher incidence than many other countries anyway) is 20 per cent — the Sinn Féin survey uncovers a rate of 56 per cent, Seán Crowe says.

And of the 184 homes surveyed, more than one in three (64 = 35 per cent) reported that they had never suffered from respiratory problems before moving to Tallaght.

Of the 166 residents who suffer from breathing problems, nearly three quarters (119 = 72 per cent) said they never suffered these problems before moving into the area or had only recently developed problems.

Councillor Crowe said he wants Government health inspectors to go through GPs' and hospital records to determine whether or not there is an exceptionally high level of asthma and bronchitis in parts of Tallaght because of the effects of cement blasting.

"Weekly rock blasting at the Roadstone plant leaves car and house windows and washing lines coated with layers of dust — if this is what we can see on the surface, what is it possibly doing to our children's insides?"

He also pointed out that medical costs of inhalers and sprays for children afflicted with

the illness could add up to £90 a month to the family budget.

Councillor Crowe added:

"There is a strong suspicion among families that the cement blasting at Roadstone and high levels of breathing problems are not unconnected.

"I welcome the open approach that Roadstone has shown in offering to co-operate with investigating safety authorities.

"I also welcome development and the jobs it creates in our community, but all this has to be balanced against the cost to our community in terms of our children's health, future well-being and enjoyment of life.

"I am calling on Health Minister Micheál Martin to authorise a comprehensive investigation into the high rates of breathing problems among people living in parts of West Tallaght."

The I-Tallaght-ian Job

Tallaght wonderkid Robbie Keane has recently signed for Italian giants Inter Milan but he is seen here lining out with a team from the Tallaght Women's Support Project with Sinn Féin's Seán Crowe on Robbie's left wing.



Join **Sinn Féin**



Send Name, Address & Age to:
Unit 9, St. Dominics Shopping Ctr.
Tallaght, Dublin 24

Sinn Féin Lobby EU Parliament

LOCAL Councillor Seán Crowe and Sinn Féin Chairperson Mitchel McLaughlin (both pictured left) visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg in July to update MEPs on developments in the Irish Peace Process and to lobby on funding for Ireland.

As part of their three-day intensive round of talks they met the leaders of all the main MEPs' Groups — except the racists and

neo-Nazi Euro Far Right and Ian Paisley!

Among those they met were Pat Cox, Leader of the European Liberal Democrats Party; Heidi Hautala, Leader of the Greens/European Free Alliance; Franz Wurtz, Leader of the Confederal Group of the European United Left/ Nordic Green Left; Fianna Fáil MEP Gerry Collins, Deputy Leader of the Union for the Europe of the Nations Group; and Michel Rochard, of the Group of the Party of European Socialists, which includes the Irish and British Labour Parties.

The 'new' Heroin Crisis

THE recent spate of deaths among heroin addicts in Dublin, due reportedly to a mysterious illness, has prompted a wave of media attention and claims from Government officials and TDs that **ONLY NOW** is Ireland in the midst of a heroin crisis.

Just what planet have these people been living on?

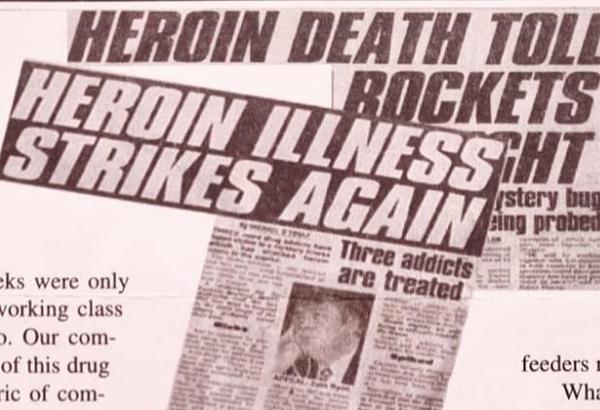
Some of those who died in recent weeks were only toddlers when heroin began to scourge working class communities across Dublin 20 years ago. Our communities have seen the growth of the use of this drug and the damage it has caused to the fabric of community life, especially among young people.

Councillor Mark Daly said:

"It is maddening to all those families touched by devastation and death that it is only now that people in positions of power are starting to wake up to the reality that has been the normality for many communities.

The talents, hopes and futures of many Irish people have been lost because the Establishment couldn't really care less when it comes to those who live on the margins of society."

Mystery illness or not, there is no real mystery as to the root cause of the disease and death associated with heroin abuse.



The cause is perfectly clear — a rotten system run by rotten Establishment politicians who seem to care more about lining their own pockets than tackling deprivation and the ghettoisation of whole sections of society. Jail sentences for top drug dealers are few and far between. And despite the demise of drugs baron Derek Dunne in Holland, there are always more bottom

feeders ready to exploit society's misery.

What is needed is a comprehensive drugs policy encompassing judicial sanc-

tions, education, prevention, treatment, and after-care as well as creating an environment where young people can feel fulfilled without having to turn to drugs.

But Sinn Féin believes that this can only work in the context of a broader approach of radical social and economic change. This Government and the Establishment parties have neither the guts nor the vision to bring about serious, radical, long-term change in our communities — Sinn Féin has and that is what we are working for.

NEW OLD BAWN FOOTPATH READY FOR SCHOOL TERM

MARK DALY, Sinn Féin councillor for Tallaght Central, has welcomed the start of work after his long campaign for a proper footpath to replace the mud path at the rear of Cúl na Greine used by pupils of Old Bawn Community School.

This footpath will also serve local residents using the Aylesbury Shopping Centre and The Square.

Councillor Daly said:

"I am delighted to see the works finally starting but they should be supplemented by a concrete bung wall to stop stolen cars being driven onto the green.

"Many young children play here all day, every day here and it is an important green space for the area."

DODDER PARK NEEDS A WARDEN

Councillor **MARK DALY** has called on South Dublin County Council to assign a park warden to cut down anti-social behaviour in Dodder Park.

The delay in beginning repair work in Dodder Park outstanding for the past two years shows just how low this community facility is on the Council's priorities, Councillor Daly said.

He has also asked the Parks Committee to build a footpath for people using the new bus stop.

"If a park warden is assigned to Dodder Park it will reduce people's fears about anti-social behaviour and their safety and increase the use by residents of Seskin, Old Bawn, New Bawn and Millbrook Lawns."



Cllr. Mark Daly

NATIONAL LIBRARY
IRELAND

HOUSING ACTION NEEDED

WITH HOUSE PRICES rising way faster than inflation again this year, there is a clear need for real action on the housing crisis.

The media hints of new and radical measures from the Government-commissioned 'Bacon 3 Report' failed to materialise. Commentators right across the political spectrum said that Bacon's ideas will have little or no effect on the housing crisis.

Last November, local Sinn Féin Councillors Seán Crowe and Mark Daly tabled a motion at South Dublin County Council calling on Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy to come up with new and radical proposals to tackle aspects of the housing crisis.

The Sinn Féin councillors' proposed:-

- i) An increase in Capital Gains Tax to 40 per cent and 60 per cent on speculative home owners;
- ii) Abolishing stamp duty for all first-time buyers of homes priced under £150,000;
- iii) The introduction of rent control on private-rented accommodation.

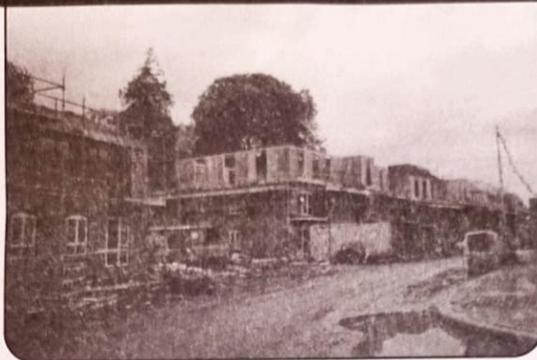
These Sinn Féin initiatives were supported by the majority of councillors who sent them to Charlie McCreevy. The only concession by the Fianna Fáil minister to Sinn Féin's proposal was the promise that, from April 2002, Capital Gains Tax will be applied to sales of development land zoned for residential use.

Sinn Féin's proposals on Capital Gains Tax would increase the number of houses on the sales market and help bring prices down, especially in the highly-expensive Dublin market.

There is some evidence that the Government is learning from Sinn Féin's ideas as a new Finance Bill is to be brought before TDs in the autumn which will increase duty on the purchasers of multiple homes.

Seán Crowe said that it is good that the Government is finally on a learning curve as to how to tackle the housing crisis. However, initial reports of the new Finance Bill and other proposals sound like a weak version of what is really needed.

"There is huge public goodwill for whoever can come up with a fair and quick solution to the housing crisis," he said. "Sinn Féin has set out some radical



proposals which I believe can break the log-jam on housing."

The question that none of the three Bacon Reports can address is whether this Government really has the will to deal with the problems created by their developer and speculator friends and make some real moves to solve this housing crisis.

Sinn Féin's proposals on housing include:-

- Increase rapidly the building programme of local authority housing without a return to the planning disasters of the past where communities were abandoned without adequate services, facilities and employment opportunities;
- Introduce rent control linked to the year of purchase to control extortionate rent levies;
- Increase Capital Gains Tax over a two-year phased basis to 40 per cent and 60 per cent rates on owners of speculative housing property;
- Abolish stamp duty for houses whose purchase price is less than £150,000;
- Extend First-time Buyer's Grant to all first-home purchasers;
- Tackle profiteering by property developers and house builders;
- Set price controls and monitor new housing developments to stop price hiking;
- Tackle planning abuses: The Flood Tribunal has highlighted extensive abuses of the planning law — central government must act to punish anyone guilty of abuses;
- Encourage social and co-operative housing developments.

We can overcome injustice — Adams

IN A KEYNOTE speech in Derry, Gerry Adams said that the Celtic Tiger economy "does not cherish all the children of the nation equally".

The Sinn Féin president said:

"Even young families with decent incomes can no longer afford a home.

"Drug abuse, housing shortages, crowded classrooms and hospital queues are not the mark of a just and equitable society. Meagre hand-outs are not enough.

"We have seen the many abuses of the planning process in the South. We have witnessed the revelations of the various tribunals as they expose the corruption in the political system.

"All of these burdens and injustices can be overcome. But this will only happen if we make it happen.

"Sinn Féin is a voice for the voiceless, a lobby for the marginalised, a champion of the forgotten, a campaigning party while at the same time appealing to a broad range of people on the platform of national democracy and social justice.

"We will also be a party of serious opposition and good government and will be increasingly relevant to the creation of the Ireland of the future in time to come.

"We are living through a time of great hope, great risk, and great opportunity. But it is also a time to remember that, as Seamus Heaney puts it: 'A further shore is reachable from here'."



PENSIONER'S WALL REBUILT IN COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

CUSHLAWN PARK residents came out in a terrific show of community spirit to support Sinn Féin Councillor Seán Crowe's recent initiative to clean up the area and rebuild a pensioner's garden wall destroyed by so-called 'joy-riders'.

Seán Crowe welcomed the community input and said that the wall had become a symbol to many people of what was wrong with the Council policies.

"Council officials need a more proactive and realistic approach to the needs of local people," Seán Crowe said.

Well done, Cushlawn.

Tallaght baby's four cancelled lung operations expose nursing crisis

THE distraught parents of two-year-old Dillon Smyth (pictured right), from Glenshane, Tallaght, said they were at their "wits end" one Saturday in August. Lisa Smyth and Damien O'Hare were beside themselves with stress when they approached local Sinn Féin Councillor Seán Crowe. They had just been told that their son's lung surgery had been cancelled yet again. This was **FOUR times in SIX days!**

Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin said the operation could not go ahead because there were not enough nurses to administer the one-to-one, post-operative care little Dillon would need.

The Intensive Care Unit is short of 23 specialist nurses - nearly a quarter of its total staff complement of 105. Four of the unit's 17 beds cannot be used because of staffing levels. Six out of 24 operating theatre nurses' posts are vacant.

Dillon was struck down with pneumonia and a painful abscess grew on his lung, posing a threat to his health in later years.

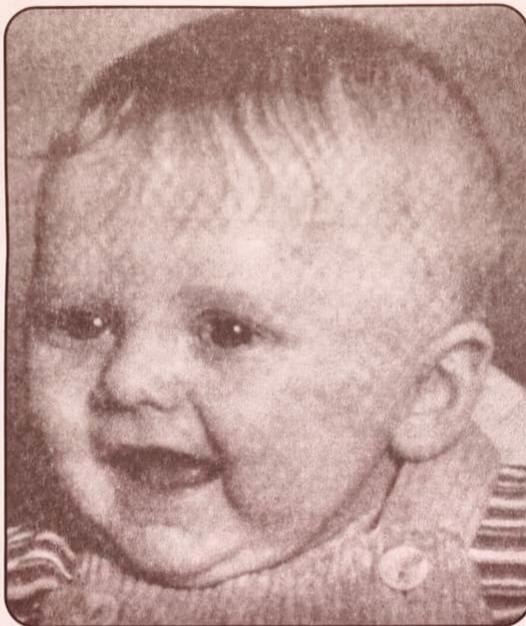
Dillon's operation was scheduled four times that week — on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. On the Thursday, a surgeon even came in on his day off, only to have the operation cancelled because of the staff shortage in the Intensive Care Unit.

Dillon's parents had nothing but praise for the staff at Crumlin but Lisa Smyth says: "This was every parent's worst nightmare — watching your child's health go downhill before your eyes."

But then Sinn Féin and Councillor Seán Crowe took up the case of little Dillon. Dillon's story appeared on TV and radio and all the daily newspapers. Spurred on by the publicity no doubt, the operation finally went ahead the following week.

Dillon's parents are naturally delighted but they have met other families like them and they have voiced their concern over continuing hold-ups over staff shortages.

Seán Crowe said that Dillon's case is symp-



tomatic of a two-tier health service.

"If Dillon's parents had money, they wouldn't have had to wait another day for the operation — they could buy their way into a private hospital."

Now Dillon has had his operation and he is on the road to recovery.

But what about other families?

Seán Crowe wants Health Minister Micheál Martin to make sure this doesn't happen again.

He has called for the Department of Health to bring together health officials, nurses' unions and patients' organisations in a working group to examine the problems behind the staff shortages and inadequate services.

"The Government must launch a vigorous recruitment drive and improve the conditions and pay for nurses taking up the strenuous work involved in caring for children in intensive care.

"When we are being told day in day out by the Government that we're riding high on the back of the Celtic Tiger and we've never had it so good, is there anything more important to people's quality of life than an efficient public health service that looks after health care workers and patients?"

Housing points system needs to be reviewed

COUNCILLOR MARK DALY is calling for a review of the way housing points are assessed.

"The system does not help those living in hugely overcrowded conditions gain any extra points if their situation deteriorates further," Mark Daly says.

The councillor cites the facts of one case but can give no other details because of the applicant's entitlement to confidentiality.

"It is a nonsense that a young woman with a child living in the box room of a house who has qualified for the maximum of 20 points does not receive any further points if she subsequently has to share the room with another member of the family — even if it is her brother!

"How can those who are in the most need hope to get housed if their situations are not taken fully into account?"

Mark Daly adds:

"The points system does not take into account the stress endured by parents who have adult children living with them. These adults need their own environment to develop into parents themselves without the strain of living in a house that they don't want to be in or indeed they may not be really wanted in.

"This causes much mental stress on everyone involved and can only have a negative effect on the young children forced to grow up in these conditions."

Minimum wage into line

THOUSANDS of people have contacted the Irish Congress of Trade Unions telephone information line on the minimum wage.

The £4.40 per hour minimum wage was introduced reluctantly by the Fianna Fáil/PI Government on the 1st of April in the face of a campaign led by the Dublin Trades Council and Sinn Féin for a more realistic £5 an hour.

People aged 18 and over AND who have at least two years' experience should be getting £4.40 an hour.

You can contact the ICTU information line at 1800 440 400 or write to: ICTU, 32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

Sinn Féin — Campaigning for YOU

SINN FÉIN has continued to bring local issues onto the national stage and in the media spotlight. From the neglect by the Council and utility companies that led to the Cushlawn residents' estate clean-up, to worries about asthma rates in West Tallaght, to the nursing shortage that forced repeated postponements of a vital lung operation for two-year-old Dillon Smith, Sinn Féin has campaigned to get things done.

The Irish Times (August 17) said that the national profile given to the plight of little Dillon Smyth by Sinn Féin Councillor Seán Crowe has brought the staff crisis in the health service "into sharp focus".

Sinn Féin will continue to fight for you. Sinn Féin — campaigning for social and economic justice.