

# People Before Profit

## BALLYFERMOT NEWSLETTER



# CUTS FOR US... BAILOUTS FOR THE RICH

2009 will be a year to remember for all the wrong reasons.

The Fianna Fail/Green Government, with the collaboration of Labour/FG and the union leaders, attacked the poorest and most vulnerable in society, drove down wages & watched while half a million workers joined the dole queue.

Alongside this they bailed out developers and bankers with their NAMA deal and ensured that the tax loopholes that keep the super-wealthy in their mansions and yachts remained untouched. So far the banks have been directly given over €12 billion of our money and are coming back for more next month.

### Where has all the money gone?

The rich in Ireland have done well from the Celtic Tiger:

The richest 5% of people in the country own 40% of the wealth.

In 2007 439 individuals got tax breaks worth €288 million

The top 1% have €100 billion in assets and 20% of all wealth

The top ten richest people have €17 billion. Half of them are tax exiles.

Interest relief and other subsidies for landlords cost the exchequer €1.2 billion

It beggars belief that low and average paid workers are being forced to pay for a crisis that was created by developers and bankers and the politicians that were in their pockets.

### Stop the Banks Evictions – Bail Out Workers Not Bankers

**According to the ESRI, 116,000 borrowers of home loans were in negative equity by the end of 2009.**

**This is expected to rise to 350,000 borrowers by the end of 2010 if house prices continue to fall. And added to this most workers have had their pay cut and tens of thousands have lost their jobs.**

**In 2009 more than 970 applications were lodged in the High Court for re-possession of homes by the banks, an increase of 160% in 2 years. 2010 is predicted to be the worst year yet.**

**Instead of throwing more of our money (another 12 billion euro next month) at the banking system, our government should be protecting those families who are facing eviction. It is like the Penal Days in the 1700 and 1800's – only this time it's the banks not the English landlords that are the masters of evictions.**

**People Before Profit has organised a public meeting to discuss this personal debt crisis and how we can organise to fight the banks.**

### Supreme Court backs powerful interests

The Anti Bin Tax Campaign is extremely disappointed with the outcome of Supreme Court appeal taken by the City Council.

The judges completely fudged the substantive issue of the Council's failure to give a financial incentive to recycle in the bin charges for 2001 and 2002, in accordance with the Waste Management Act. At the same time they have allowed the appeal by the Council.

The council have taken this action at a considerable cost, at a time when services are being cut across the city due to lack of funding.

The Supreme Court decision reinforces the belief that the justice system in this country is heavily weighted in favour of the wealthy and powerful.

The campaign will be calling public meetings in Ballyfermot in the next few weeks to explain the implications of the court ruling and to take decisions for the way forward.

Meantime if you have any queries in relation to this please contact 087 9090166.

While not winning a victory in the courts, we have demonstrated that there is huge resistance among ordinary citizens to double taxation.

This issue is not over. From July onwards the bin taxes may be increased by up to 21% because the Council will be adding VAT to our bills.

Please make every effort to get to the public meetings in your area when they called.

## Stop the Evictions – Public Meeting

**Tuesday 9 February 8pm  
Ballyfermot United Social Club  
Blackditch Road  
- All Welcome -**

## COUNCIL BUDGET –

# LABOUR AND FINE GAEL IMPLEMENT CUTS TO SERVICES AND ABOLISH BIN TAX WAIVERS

Labour and Fine Gael claim to be in opposition to the Government.

Yet even though they have a majority on the City Council, they had no problem passing on cuts in this year's budget.

The government has cut funding to the City Council this year by 6.3%.

This amounts to a 20% cut in funding to the biggest council in the country since 2008.

This gives elected councillors a choice – to cut funding to housing, local amenities and services, to increase bin charges, rents and others OR to stand up to the Government.

No prizes for guessing which choice was made.

This budget abolished the waiver for bin collection for everybody on social welfare. It increased bin charges for the rest by 5%.

In July the Council will impose VAT on all charges including bins by either 13.5% or 21%.

On top of this the budget for the fire service was cut. Funding to the BASE youth project in Ballyfermot was cut. And council rents for subsidiary earners was increased.

The same budget cut the rates for businesses by 2.4%



and gave a further hand out to developers by cutting capital spending on social housing and giving extra to the council to lease property from developers.

And all council workers have had their pay cut by over 17% in the last year.

Councillors could have voted against this budget. And yes we could have been abolished and the manager could have implemented the same budget.

So we would not get our allowances or our expenses but we would have shown

the government we had the bottle to stand up to them and to organise in our com-

munities against their agenda of attacking the poor to bail out the rich.

## WHO VOTED FOR THIS BUDGET?

In this area Councillors Vincent Jackson and Michael Conaghan voted for the budget. Councillors Brid Smith and Louise Minihan voted against.

The most controversial part of the budget was the removal of the waiver on bin lifts for 40,000 of the lowest income families in the city.

The waiver on the standing charge of €95 is still in place but it will cost €6 for each bin lift.

The anti bin tax campaign has always argued that the waiver scheme would be a temporary measure and unfortunately we have been proven correct.

Water tax is coming at us next with metres to be installed in all homes this year.

People Before Profit will be organising for a re-launch of a mass campaign against all stealth taxes.

## 17% less pay in your pocket? 17% less cooperation at work!

People Before Profit would like to express their solidarity with all union members as they start their industrial action across the public sector.

The disgraceful cut of on average of 17% to public sector pay checks along with the recruitment embargo have left public sector workers working harder for less.

This has to stop and the cuts of 2009 have to be reversed.

The sole reason for these cuts is to bail out the banks. Of the €4 billion, for example, raised in the last budget, every cent has already gone into bank bail-outs.

And the astounding fact is that the bankers are coming back for more.

From February onwards, they will demand at least another €10 billion to 're-capitalise' their businesses.

It is sheer madness. In simple language, the bankers' government want to rob workers

and the poor to pay off gambling debts run up on property speculation.

## WE NEED STRONG UNIONS

The response of the union leaders to date has been exceptionally weak.

They should have immediately called a series of French style national stoppages and called tens of thousands onto the streets to defeat this government.

But they ran scared and instead offered the government concessions on our hard won conditions that we built up over years. They must never be let do this again.

# CUT BACKS IN CHERRY ORCHARD HOSPITAL

The HSE budget has been cut by a shocking 1 billion euro in Brian Lenihan's budget.

This will hit health services everywhere. In this area Cherryorchard Hospital is facing serious cuts. Management are proposing to eliminate the on-site medical doctor from the hospital premises from 10pm to 8am. Staff in the hospital are extremely concerned and contacted Councillor Brid Smith to ask for support. Brid met with management at the hospital who argued that they can deliver a more efficient service overall by making this cut. But hospitals are not just about budgets, they are about human beings health and their lives.

Cherryorchard does not only cares for elderly people on respite and full time care. The hospital has one HIV respite and long term care unit, one acute drugs detoxification unit and



two young adult disability units.

It is unacceptable that these patients will be without a full time medical doctor on site. This cut will mean a major deterioration in the care available to all patients and will cause serious concern for their families and staff at the hospital.

Councillor Brid Smith is calling on the HSE to maintain an on-site doctor at all times. Management should roster in the five doctors in the hospital to give full cover or maintain the current system. Despite having asked several times for the sum of money that will be saved by this cut, man-

agement have failed to provide an answer. The question has to be asked – can the HSE stand over any consequences to the health and safety of the patients involved for the sake of a meagre cut back of this nature? Can they guarantee that the medical profession are agreeable to this cutback and not just the administrators?

Brid Smith says "We need the community and the politicians to stand up and be counted and oppose this senseless cutback. If the HSE get away with this they will come after other services in the hospital. We have stopped them cutting back in Cherryorchard in the past and we must do the same again."

Councillor Brid Smith will be organising local protests to oppose cuts in the hospital and will be asking for your full support. You can contact Brid on 087 9090166.

## LOCAL NEWS

### Traffic & Parking in Ballyfermot Drive and Parade

After a number of meetings between the traffic department of Dublin City Council and local people who are concerned for their health and safety because of the volume of traffic using the area to u turn and to park, People Before Profit councillor Brid Smith has been told that the council will erect NO U TURN signs in the area.

Local people had asked for paths to be widened and double yellow lines to be marked up. But the council are obviously choosing the cheapest and easiest option. We will have to monitor the outcome and get back to the traffic department if the problem is not resolved..

### Ramps on Lough Conn Road

Following representations made to Councillor Smith a number of requests were made to DCC to ramp Lough Conn Road, one of the few roads in Ballyfermot without ramps to slow down traffic. The traffic

department say that their surveys do not show excessive speeding on the road. Local residents don't agree.

Their children play out on the road and cars regularly drive at unacceptable speeds. Brid Smith has requested a further examination of the situation and is asking local people to report speeding incidents to her. Text or ring 087 9090166 or email smithbrid@hotmail.com

**Irish Rail and noise levels on Landen Road** Before Christmas a number of meetings were held with Irish Rail about the noise levels from engines turning over on the rail tracks during the night. The problem died down for a short period but is now back with a vengeance.

Local residents and Councillor Brid Smith met with Irish Rail last week to try to get a permanent solution to the nighttime noise levels. The manager has promised he will engage an engineer to work out a solution to ensure that local people have peace and quiet at least during the night hours.

### ESB Cuts to Kylemore Avenue and LeFanu

We all experienced some power cuts during the bad weather but local people in the Kylemore/LeFanu area have had more than their fair share. Power is regularly cut in this area to a number of homes.

People Before Profit Councillor Brid Smith set up a meeting with ESB management and local people in an effort to get a solution. Repair work has already started on the local supply network and the substations and the cut offs should not happen again in this area.

### Funding Saved for Labre Park Travellers Project

BTAP is a community project that works with the travelling community in Labre Park and provides access to education and local community initiatives.

This project has been credited with giving the travelling community a voice in the local community as well as helping many adults and young people gain access to education. Recently

two young traveller women from Labre Park started their studies in Trinity College, a fantastic achievement. Government funding of the project was threatened but an appeal against this decision has been won. Congratulations to BTAP workers and volunteers and all who put their weight behind the appeal process. Likewise funding was saved to the Matt Talbot project which can now continue its important work with the Ballyfermot community.

### Dublin City Development Plan

The Draft Development Plan for the 2011-2017 is on view in Wood Quay. Information days have been set up for Ballyfermot and the next one is for 10 February from 1 to 8pm in the Civic Centre.

The major impact of the plan in this area will be around Cherryorchard and Park West. Brid Smith has requested that the Planning Department organise a public information forum specifically for the Cherryorchard area and a meeting will be held in the next two weeks.

# WHY IS THERE A WATER CRISIS?

**It seems extraordinary that at a time that our weather has been dominated by record levels of rainfall, stories of polluted water supplies and now water shortages would be a constant.**

In the Budget last December, it was announced that a system of domestic water metering is to be introduced and that charges will be based on the amount consumed above a free allocation.

The argument is that our 'free' water does not encourage users to conserve supplies...essentially that we are to blame for the wasting of water.

Superficially the figures back this up. Daily domestic consumption per head is approximately 160 litres in Ireland. This compares to 150 litres in the UK where 25% of water users are metered, and 126 litres in Germany and 116 litres in Denmark where all water users are metered.

But there is no evidence that this lower consumption is a result of water of metering.

The introduction of quotas, which provide for limited free water, will require an expensive national metering installation programme.

Even if the majority of homes could limit their usage to below quota levels the savings could

be cancelled out by the cost of monitoring and administering the programme.

The money spent would be better directed to implement improved domestic water conservation measures.

And there are plenty of options. We don't need drinking quality water to flush toilets or wash our clothes...and certainly not to wash cars or water gardens.

There are proven systems for the collection of rainwater and grey water for functions that do not require water of drinking standard.

Grey water is the wastewater produced from washing activities, between 50-80% of the total. Installation of dual flush toilets, which handle solid and liquid waste with different rates of flushing, would also make a huge difference.

And better insulation of homes would have meant those who left their taps running to stop their pipes freezing, would not have felt obliged to do so. These are all major factors in the significantly reduced usage in Germany and Denmark.

But the domestic users are not the biggest wasters of water. On average 43% of treated drinking water is lost through the distribution network, largely via pipe leakage and illegal



***In the next general election our candidate for the South Central constituency will be Councillor Joan Collins (left) who represents the Crumlin area and is a well-known, staunch working class campaigner.***

***In the election for a Dublin Mayor, People Before Profit will be standing our local councillor Brid Smith (right).***

connections. The antiquated condition of the pipe network is a direct result of years of under investment.

And the long-term prospect, if charges are implemented, is privatization. This is exactly what happened in England and Wales when Thatcher privatized the ten public regional water and sewerage companies.

The Daily Mail, a staunch Tory Party supporter, ran a feature in 1994 'The Great Water Robbery', which slated the companies on all counts: "In recent weeks the penny has been dropping that something has gone horrendous-

ly wrong with the privatisation of Britain's water industry.

When it was privatised in 1989 the water industry was hailed as the jewel in the crown of the Thatcherite privatisation programme....In reality, as a string of reports have confirmed... the water industry has become the biggest rip-off in Britain.

Water bills, both to households and industry, have soared. And the directors and shareholders of Britain's top ten water companies have been able to use their position as monopoly suppliers to pull off the greatest act of licensed robbery in our history".

## Join the People Before Profit Alliance

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