

NEW IRISH WHEELCHAIR ASSOCIATION CENTRE ON TARGET FOR BELMULLET AS LAYING OF THE FIRST BLOCK GETS UNDERWAY.

Friday 15th October 2010 – A new state-of-the-art Resource and Outreach centre for Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA), located in Logmore, Belmullet, Co Mayo, is on target and is expected to be completed within seven months. Details of the development, catering for 124 people with limited mobility, were announced today at the site of the new centre by **Dara Calleary TD, Minister for Labour Affairs and Public Service Transformation.**

The first Resource and Outreach Service set up by IWA in 1996, operated from rented premises in Belmullet. The new centre, according to IWA spokesperson Regional Director Tony Cunningham, “means that more people with limited mobility can now be catered for throughout the Erris region. Today is a very special day for IWA and our members as we have been planning this new centre for over ten years now”!

The HSE West commenting on the new facility said “We welcome the opportunity to support IWA in developing the infrastructure. The service currently provided by IWA is an example of a dynamic integrated efficient service meeting the needs of the community. We wish IWA every success in the venture and we are committed to working in partnership with IWA to further develop the potential presented by the new development. It is heartening that even in these difficult economic times, quality developments such as this one can be progressed”.

Tony Cunningham went on to say: “There is no other service provider in Erris for people with physical disabilities. It is vital that IWA provide a long-term commitment to its members in a suitable purpose built centre. Our work has gone from strength to strength over the years with support from the local people of Erris who fundraise for our services. I am delighted that we will soon have a top class facility for our members, staff and volunteers to enjoy”.

In 2009 IWA renewed its ongoing applications for funding for the state-of-the-art facilities and to date, the IWA has managed to secure the funding required from various organisations and government departments including HSE West, Fionntar Chomhraic Teo, Shell E & P Ireland, the National Lottery, Department of Health & Children, IWA fundraising and most recently, the Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Pat Carey, pledged €300,000 of Clár Programme funding towards the development.

Commenting on the new IWA Centre a spokesperson for **Shell E&P Ireland Limited** (SEPIL) said: “Irish Wheelchair Association’s centre in Belmullet provides invaluable support services for people with disabilities and their families, from right across the Barony of Erris. This new facility will allow for the continuation and expansion of those much needed services and will be a fantastic resource for Erris”.

Fiontar Chomhraic Teo under the terms of the Bellacorick Enterprise Fund is happy to support the Irish Wheelchair Association’s development in Belmullet.

Due for completion in less than seven months IWA will provide essential services covering accessible transport, sports, training, education and most importantly social outings for members. Resource and Outreach Centres supports people with disabilities in their day-to-day lives by offering locally-based recreational and educational programmes.