

## 'Member meets Member' evening at Finlay Ford

November's Chamber event was an evening at Finlay Ford Showrooms in Moorefield Road, Newbridge. Sales Director Gary Finlay welcomed everyone along and gave a brief history of how the

family business went from strength to strength since their 1968 beginnings in Monasterevin. He went on to outline their very ambitious plans for a huge new Finlay's development near Naas. We wish them well

in all their 2007 endeavours. After Gary's presentation, the attendees put their skills to the test in a fun quiz while networking over nibbles and drinks, with hilarious results!



Winners of the quiz on the night with Gary Finlay, Sales Director (L), and Karen Keenan (R) Finlay Ford are John Leddy, The Leinster Partnership, Peter Moran, East Coast Radio, & Colette McGrath, The Office Centre



Willie Doyle, Doyle Equipment chatting with Brian McCormack, McCormack Solicitors



Hibernia Computer Services' John Gallagher & Paul Rafter examining those cars!

## Budget Breakfast

Once again this year, this annual Chamber engagement was packed out, despite the early start of 7.45a.m. on 7th December last! Campbell & Company's experts Sasha Kerins and Stephen Connolly gave their analysis of the previous day's 2007 Budget, after which members posed questions on their specific areas of interest. The breakfast supplied by The Restaurant at Newbridge Silverware was definitely worth getting up for and the morning concluded promptly at 9a.m. so everyone could get off to work without being delayed. Over €900 was raised for Teach Tearmainn Women's Refuge by attendees, as Campbell & Company kindly sponsored the cost of everyone's breakfast! Many thanks to all concerned in helping to raise this amount for such a worthy cause pre-Christmas.



Joe Fennell, Deirdre Coghlan-Murray, Shane Campbell, Sasha Kerins and Stephen Connolly finalise the last details before breakfast is served



Some of the attentive budget enthusiasts



The packed restaurant of attendees tuck in to breakfast prior to the Budget presentation

## Family Succession Planning evening

Baker Tilly O'Hare's Andrew Bourg & Suzanne Fogarty gave an excellent presentation to those with Family Businesses on all aspects of planning and preparing for the day when you either sell or pass on your own business. Much time was spent also on the various ways of actually valuing the business in the first place. Those in attendance got useful literature to look over in their own time after the talk in Hotel Keadeen on 3rd October last. Many thanks to both speakers for a most informative evening. If you missed the event and would like copies of the presentations made, please simply contact breda@newbridgechamber.ie or call the office at tel. 438 296.



## National Children's Hospital Tallaght

The National Children's Hospital Tallaght invites you to join them at their 9th annual Golf Classic at the internationally acclaimed PGA National Ireland Golf Course at Palmerstown House, Johnstown, Naas on Thursday, 28th June 2007. To sponsor a team or teebox for this worthy cause, please contact Eileen Scullion at eileen@thenationalchildrenshospital.ie or call 01 414 2374. Alternatively you can download a brochure at www.thenationalchildrenshospital.ie

Best wishes for Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year to all our Members.



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# Chamberchat

WINTER 2006



## MEMBERS DEMAND ACTION ON BROADBAND

Newbridge Chamber's CEO, President and Vice-President will be calling to the Dail this month to represent members' concerns regarding Broadband and other issues.

Broadband came screaming to the fore as an area where members want Chamber to lobby on their collective behalf, in our recent Newbridge Chamber Policy Survey. Problems being caused by lengthy delays on installation of Broadband or, in some cases, a total lack of access in their geographic location, are seriously impacting on businesses setting up or expanding.

On a positive note, it was good to see the majority of respondents reply that they were happy with the Garda response to crime in the town and surrounding areas. Street cameras on pivotal points in the town were requested by a small number of members.

Commercial rates and insurance costs have also emerged as top concerns to Newbridge businesses. 91% of respondents said they were worried by costs relating to rates and 82% by insurance, with parking issues (77%), transport & traffic matters (68%) and waste management (59%) next in line for attention. Members felt that Kildare County Council rates are expensive while they are not clear what they get in return for rates paid. This transport & traffic figure while far from satisfactory compares favourably to last year when everyone in the town had to really suffer while the improvements were being put in place.

In the interests of a level playing field, the issue of all landlords paying commercial rates on rental properties, not just businesses, was raised. Increasing costs of doing business posed a 'significant problem' for 50% of those who replied to the survey. Utility providers Eircom, ESB and Bord Gais particularly came in for criticism regarding increasing costs. Higher energy costs in general caused members concern as they affect profitability and therefore viability of businesses, especially for small to medium size enterprises. The quality of service experienced for various telecom providers and Kildare County Council also fell well below expectation, with incidences of water being turned off recently without notice cited as a major worry for some organisations.

Litter is a continuing bug bear, raised by many members who are anxious that it gives Newbridge a 'dirty' image. This is so disappointing despite all the wonderful work done by the Tidy Towns committee as featured in our last issue of 'Chamberchat'.

Once again the Chamber asks all businesses to do their bit by tidying up outside their own premises.

One area raised in the survey by a number of members in the 'general comments' invited was the whole area of infrastructure and related lack of planning. Owners/ Managers ask how they can attract staff to the town when there are no school places available for new families. Lack of infrastructural planning has very real implications for business, as it could ultimately result in a restriction on labour supply. On a similar note, we have been asked to examine the wider issue of maintaining a healthy community where businesses want to invest i.e. this includes the provision of adequate youth focused activities which contributes to a thriving and content community. Such facilities are sadly lacking in Newbridge and its environs.

Our Policy Task Force will examine the results of the survey in detail and draw up an action plan to lobby the relevant authorities/providers to make a difference on your behalf. Many thanks to all of you who completed the Policy survey. If you have an issue, please contact the office at tel./fax 045 438 296 or email office@newbridgechamber.ie. If we are not aware of a problem, we cannot take action. Don't leave it to someone else, use your Chamber membership.



### Sharpen your skills in Spring 2007

Why not kick off 2007 with some training for you and/or your staff? We are offering low cost courses, locally, with the pick of presenters on the topics you have advised us you need. Please let Breda McHale know if you would like to reserve a place on any of the following courses:

Topic	Duration	Cost
1. Health & Safety for Managers	1 day	€210
2. Occupational Health & Safety Law	Half day	€130
3. Occupational First Aid	3 days	€500
4. Manual Handling	Half day	€100
5. VDU Assessment	Half day	€80
6. Customer Service	1 day	€210
7. Legislative matters; Obligations for Owner/Managers in Business	Half day	€130

All courses will take place in January/February/March 2007

Tel./fax 045 438 296 or email: breda@newbridgechamber.ie



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## CHAMBER COMMENT

### Newbridge Chamber President speaks out about what's on her mind right now:

Once again we come to the end of another year. For Newbridge, 2006 has been an exciting and extremely progressive year with the opening of White Water Shopping Centre, the completion of the first phase of major road works, the official opening of a new landmark building in the town for Newbridge Credit Union and of course the commencement of building a new headquarters for Horse Racing Ireland. Obviously, Newbridge appeals to business and it is wonderful to see the investment and development in the town.

It has been a very busy year for our chamber and we are delighted to see an increase in our membership of almost 40%. Our members have taken part in many events including Training & Development, Networking events, Information evenings, our Annual Golf Day, Member meets Member evenings, Surveys and Business Forums. Our committee meets once a month, in between which our sub-committees work on various projects or actions to ensure we are providing a forward thinking and relevant service to our members.

As my term as President comes to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the committee for their hard work and support over the last two years. A big thank you to our Office staff, Celia Quinn and Breda McHale for all their hard work and commitment. Finally, thank you to our sponsors, corporate members and our members in general. It has been a pleasure getting to know you and we look forward to your continued support as members of Newbridge Chamber in the future.

I have complete confidence that Newbridge Chamber will have a strong voice through our incoming President Joe Fennell and wish him every success in the role for 2007.

On behalf of the committee and myself, I would like to wish all our members a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.



**Deirdre Coghlan-Murray**  
President Newbridge Chamber

## Open for Business at Newbridge Credit Union

I spoke to Manager **Des Diver** last month, when he kindly fitted me in for a few minutes in a busy week which included their AGM. The AGM, which went on to sanction the distribution of €8.3 million in dividends to members, is a milestone in 2006, a landmark year for Newbridge Credit Union. Their new building is testament to the strength of their presence in Newbridge and one of which all its members can be justifiably proud.

Newbridge boasts the second largest "Community" based Credit Union in Ireland, with €207 million in assets! The 34 staff and 30 volunteers are mostly from the five parishes which form the 'common bond' area of Newbridge Credit Union. Their core business of personal/non-profit finance provision is made up of two primary functions; Savings and Loans. 80% of loans granted cover educational funding, home improvements, holidays and car purchase. Governed by the restrictive & prescriptive 1997 Credit Unions Act, they must stick with these core functions. As an aside, Des mentioned he and his colleagues are involved in lobbying to try to update the rules governing them to ensure they reflect the demands of members in 2006/7 Ireland. While sticking with the provision of loans and savings, they would hope to provide a wider variety of products to offer members.

While waiting for Des I noticed a Polish staff member helping non-national members. When I asked him about this he explained that this person Michal Klingsporn was employed six months ago to help with the upsurge in Polish and other nationalities of people joining. Feedback has shown this initiative to be extremely successful. Of the 200 or so new members a month joining Newbridge Credit Union, approx. half of these people are non native English speakers.



*Des Diver, Manager of Newbridge Credit Union*

I then asked Des what he could tell me about the all important question – the Credit Union's 'bottom line'. Their loan book – a key indicator of well-being for credit unions – stands at €123 million, and bad debts currently amount to 0.3% (provision made at 3%). This excellent bad debts record is due mainly to the focused nature of credit control – staff and the voluntary members who have their finger on the pulse of local applicants. Des attributes much of the success of Newbridge Credit Union overall to the prudent management of resources and strong bad debt management.

**With Chamber members in mind, I finally asked Des what services they provide to business.** He explained they have given loans to many businesses in the past to help get enterprises up and running. Many of these now successful companies stay as loyal Credit Union members long after the loans are repaid. Going forward, Newbridge Credit Union will be focusing more on small to medium business lending, as part of its Strategic Plan. As I left Des to continue preparations for the AGM, I thought it could indeed be well worth your while getting in contact to see what the credit union can do for you and your business. Contact Des Diver on 045 433848 or email [info@newbridgecu.ie](mailto:info@newbridgecu.ie).

*Breda McHale*

## Business in the Community

The Chamber organisation feels very passionate about fostering good business practice in the wider community. This commitment to active corporate social responsibility manifests itself in businesses helping out the community in a variety of ways nationwide. In Spring 2007, Newbridge Chamber intends to launch some projects which will physically help make our locality a better place. We will keep you posted and hope all our members will row in behind us to support the initiatives. If your company is already involved in such projects (e.g. recycling, clever waste disposal etc.) please let us know!

## Contact Details

**Are your details up to date?** Don't forget to let us know if any of your contact details change, especially your **email address**. This will enable us to keep you informed accurately on what's happening of interest in the area. It would also be helpful to have your **mobile number** for our database – we will not release personal email addresses or mobile numbers to anyone else but it would be good for us to hold if we need to contact you with business opportunities! The office tel. no. is 045 438296 or our email is [office@newbridgechamber.ie](mailto:office@newbridgechamber.ie).

## New Member

We extend a welcome to new member **Simon Kenny of Hidden Hearing**, Ireland's leading hearing aid specialists, recently arrived at Cutlery Road, Newbridge. Tel: 045 450352.

## Passion for Community

We have now completed the third and final award presentation with Vodafone for 2007. Vodafone's "Passion for the World Around Us" community awards acknowledge people who demonstrate a keen commitment to improving the world in which we live; those who make a positive difference to their community.

The **first 2006 award** was given in June and went to worthy winners **Naas Arch Club**. The Club is committed to providing a social outlet for young adults with intellectual needs. They meet once a week and offer a secure social environment to help participants form new friendships, try out new activities and above all, have fun! The Club holds the view that inclusion and integration into the community benefits society as a whole.

Orla O' Connell, Chairperson of the Naas Arch Club said they were very grateful for the support received from the wider community including Vodafone and Bank of Ireland, who nominated them for the award. Their aim is to attract equal numbers of volunteers and members. "Awards such as this highlight our existence and we invite any new volunteers out there to come along to our club any Tuesday evening to help out and join in the fun".

**2006's second round** was the inaugural 'Passion for the World Around Us' **business award** and went to local international success story **Newbridge Silverware**. We covered this award presentation to William and Oonagh Doyle in our Autumn edition of 'Chamberchat'. This was a very popular winner with all in the locality as they do so much for the Newbridge community.

The **third round** winner is the admirable **'Republic of Ireland Supporters Club'**. A presentation was made to Phil Wolfe and his



*Joe Fennell, Deirdre Coghlan-Murray, Marian Kinahan, Naas Arch Club, Karen Hogan, Vodafone, Sheena Walsh & Brian Murphy, Members Naas Arch Club*

hard-working committee at a function in Hotel Keadeen on November 23rd last. Cllr. Pat Black nominated the Club as he has watched it grow over the past 11 years and seen the very real benefits it has passed on to those in need.

As Deirdre Coghlan-Murray, President of Newbridge Chamber, put it in her presentation address, to make so much money for charity, while obviously having such a good time, is a fantastic way of helping those less fortunate. Phil explained that the club was formed in 1995 – the Jack Charlton heyday – and the original purpose was to access tickets for Ireland's soccer games. Then when tragedy struck locally, a fundraising social was organised by the committee and that started the rollercoaster ride to where they are today. Nowadays they have 340 members and they run two or three fundraising events a year. To date, they have raised about €170,000 all told for various causes in the locality, including The Parish Lourdes Fund, The Curragh Hospice, Newbridge Day Care, Community Games and Rehab.

*Thanks to Vodafone for sponsoring these excellent Awards.*



## Republic of Ireland Supporters Club



*Joe Cullen, Vodafone, Phil Wolfe, Deirdre Coghlan-Murray, Pat Black & Joe Fennell at the award presentation*



*Republic of Ireland Supporters Club Committee*

## Curragh membership 07 offer

Evan Arkwright of The Curragh Racecourse has contacted us to extend an offer on **2007 membership** to Chamber members. This could solve your Christmas present dilemma! The offer includes admission to ALL 20 race days from March to October. In addition, members also receive free admission to over

60 reciprocal meetings at other Irish and international racecourses, together with designated car parking and a variety of special offers, discounts and promotions throughout the year.  
**Club Member €170** (usually €195).  
**Premier Member €230** (usually €255).

## Close-up on Committee

In this issue we meet incoming Newbridge Chamber President for 2007, **Joe Fennell, Manager, Bank of Ireland, Newbridge.**



Joe first arrived into Newbridge in 1979 to work for Bank of Ireland, so he has seen some changes in our town. Over the years he has had stints in Kilcullen, Kildare and covered Counties Carlow & Kildare as Bank of Ireland's District Sales Manager for a time also. Four years ago he returned to Newbridge to take up the position of Branch Manager where his team pride themselves on giving excellent advice on savings, investment and lending, no matter what amount.

A keen sports enthusiast he played soccer for Newbridge Town from 1981 – 1996, earning the coveted title of 'Player of The Year' along the way! Now he prefers to take in a round of golf whenever he can snatch the time from his other interests, which include involvement in the local Rotary and Lions Clubs.

A native of Wexford, he will however always find time to enthusiastically cheer on his hurling & football teams when the opportunity arises.....

Along with his wife Margaret and children Fiona (15) and Sean (12), the Fennell family live in Newbridge. Next year promises to be a busy one for Joe as he takes over the office of President. He is currently Treasurer and will be missed for this role! He has been involved with the Chamber organisation for many years and since 2002 with Newbridge Chamber in particular. His vision for 2007 includes building on the work of recent Presidents Deirdre Coghlan-Murray and John Commins, looking forward to seeing Newbridge develop further. "We have a great town – and we need to market it more", enthused Joe. Watch this space.

You can contact Joe at Bank Of Ireland on 045 431227.

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**Corporate Premier Member** which includes access to Premier level of grandstand for 10 people is also available at a cost of **€2,000**.  
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