

SPRING REPORT 2015

MARY MITCHELL O'CONNOR TD

Working for a better future



Dear Constituents,
As your local TD, I would like to thank you for your continued support and update you on the work I have been doing on your behalf.

Dáil Éireann, Leinster House, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 618 3302. Email: mary.mitchelloconnor@oir.ie
Constituency Office in Blackrock, Tel: (01) 210 9161 BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

Website: www.marymitchelloconnor.ie

 www.facebook.com/mary.mitchelloconnor  @mitchelloconnor



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MARY WILL CONTINUE TO WORK ON:

IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THE ELDERLY

In November, I welcomed the increase of a tax relief from €50,000 to €75,000 to help elderly people remain in their homes in their later years. I am working with Minister Varadker to solve the problems regarding the Fair Deal Scheme and trolley waiting times.

PENSION LEVY

I have worked hard on abolishing the Pension Levy, which my constituents had complained to me about. I am glad the Government decided to abolish the 0.6% Pension Levy at the end of this year, with the additional 0.15% levy expiring at the end of 2015.

LOCAL PROPERTY TAX

House prices in our constituency are increasing again and worried home owners have contacted me about being faced with a rise in Local Property Tax (LPT) when the scheduled review takes place at the end of 2016. I have contacted and will continue to lobby the Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan about maintaining the LPT at 2012 rates including the reduction of 15% from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Council.

UNIVERSAL SOCIAL CHARGE AND INCOME TAX

Many business people have brought to my attention the inequity of USC and that they don't receive enough benefits from PRSI paid. I will continue to lobby Minister Noonan to ensure equality on this and to lower our Tax rates.

MARY'S WORK IN COMMITTEE

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE ISSUES

As a member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children, and Chair of the Internal Fine Gael Committee on Education and Skills, I have been involved in highlighting and debating important issues during the year.

PUBLIC HEALTH ALCOHOL BILL 2015

This Bill will make it illegal to sell alcohol below a set minimum price. I have campaigned heavily for this policy because alcohol is killing 3 people per week and on average 2,000 hospital beds are taken up every night because of alcohol related illnesses.

TOBACCO AND PLAIN PACKAGING BILL

1 in 2 smokers will die from a smoking related illness. This legislation will remove all forms of branding including trademarks, logo, colours and graphics from cigarette packs. Despite desperate attempts from the Tobacco Industry, I am hopeful that this bill will be passed shortly.



Joint Committee on Health and Children
General Scheme of the Public Health (Standardised Packaging of Tobacco) Bill 2013 (resumed)
Houses of the Oireachtas



Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD, Minister Leo Varadker TD and xxx

BREAST CHECK PROGRAM

I strongly advocated for the extension of the BreastCheck programme which was approved in Budget 2015. This extension will now provide BreastCheck services for women from the age of 50-69 years old. Preparations for the extension are underway and will commence before the end of 2015.



DÁIL VISITS
If you, your organisation, or school would like to come in for a Dail visit, contact my Constituency Office in Blackrock at mary.mitchelloconnor@oireachtas.ie.



BLINDNESS, HEARING LOSS AND CHRONIC PAIN

I launched the National Vision Coalition's Report on the Economic Cost and Burden of Eye Diseases and Preventable Blindness in Ireland.

EDUCATION

THE NEXT GENERATION

As former Principal of the Harold National School in Glashule, I am passionate about giving all our children the best education possible.

As Chairperson of the Internal Education Committee I have chaired 39 meetings to date and have raised a number of important issues with the Minister for Education and Skills, including:

1. PUPIL TEACHER RATIOS (PTR)

I have worked hard to ensure that PTR has been maintained in our Primary and Secondary school sector and has not been increased in our fee-paying and minority ethos Schools.

2. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS' POLICY

I am working with the Minister for Education and Skills to ensure that the School Admissions' Policy is fair and equitable.

3. Childcare – Developing a policy on Pre and Afterschool Care

4. Special Education Needs – Ensuring that children receive adequate education supports

5. Fee-Charging and Minority Schools

6. Cyber bullying – Last September, I chaired an international conference on Cyberbullying in Dublin Castle

7. SCHOOL TEACHERS AND BUILDING WORKS

-1,700 new teachers, resource teachers and SNAs in our schools in 2015

Many local schools were approved for school works including:

- Booterstown Boys NS - 2 Mainstream Classrooms
- Carysfort National School, Blackrock – 5 Mainstream Classrooms
- Newpark Comprehensive, Blackrock - Post-Primary Extension
- Oatlands College – Roof Repair
- Mt Anville Primary School - 1 Classroom;
- Hollypark NS, Foxrock- 1 Classroom & 4 Resource Rooms;
- Dalkey School Project -2 Classrooms & 2 Resource Rooms;
- Monkstown Educate Together NS - 1 Classroom;
- Harold Boys NS - 1 Classroom;
- The Harold School - Renovation of School;
- Clonkeen College- 2 Classrooms & Special Needs Unit;
- St Raphaela's Secondary School - 3 Classrooms;
- Oatlands College - Replace Existing Boiler/Burner units;
- Cabinteely Community School – Replace Cold water Storage Unit;
- Holy Child Community School, Sallynoggin - Replace Fans in Home Economics Room;
- Our Lady of Mercy Convent, Booterstown Avenue – Repair Boundary Wall;



WORKING IN THE CONSTITUENCY

SPORTS

Sports and physical activity are extremely important and I am grateful for being invited to visit many local sports clubs and schools around the constituency.

Minister Michael Ring T.D. announced over €1 million for the following local clubs and groups and work is underway on these projects:

- Blackrock Bowling & Tennis Club - €87,900
- Blackrock College Rugby Football Club - €67,150
- Cuala GAA - €16,923
- Curragh Sun Aqua Club - €48,036
- Dalkey Scubadivers - €9,300
- De Vesci Lawn Tennis Club - €156,663
- Avoca Hockey Club/Dominican School, Sion Hill - €200,000
- Foxrock Cabinteely GAA Club - €1,948
- Kilmacud Crokes GAA Club - €200,000
- Monstown Hockey Club/Rathdown School - €200,000
- Sailing in Dublin Club - €23,778
- Shankill Bowling Club - €25,000
- St. Michael's Rowing Club - €19,985
- The National Yacht Club - €77,902
- Trojan Gymnastic Club - €8,500
- Trojan Swimming Club - €9,875
- 41st Dublin (St. Patrick's Dalkey) Group - €4,590

The Sports' Capital Grant Programme will continue in 2015. Please keep an eye on my website, www.marymittelloconnor.ie for further details.



Visit to Harold School: Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD, Principal Anne Moore, President of the GAA, Liam O'Neill, and Damien Byrne

DART EXTENSION

I would like to thank those who engaged with my online lobby for Irish Rail for additional carriages on the Dart. This was a successful campaign and hopefully additional carriages will adequately cater for morning and evening rush hour traffic.

CONFERENCES

Last year I hosted several conferences and events in Dún Laoghaire including:

1. Tourism in Dún Laoghaire with Minister Leo Varadkar
2. SMEs- Maximize your Public Tendering Success.
3. Marie Keating International Women's Day Coffee Morning
4. Budget 2015 Breakfast Briefing with Minister Michael Noonan



DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN NOTES

Presentation Field, Hudson Road, Glashule

I have worked really hard on this issue for years. Last November, the Council announced the opening of the Pres Field at Hudson Road. The planning process of Part 8 will commence soon with a design for the park.

Shankill Centre

I am disappointed to hear the plans for a new high end retailer to be located in the old SuperValu in the Shankill Centre have been shelved. I hope a new retailer will be found quickly.

Pottery Road

Nearly finished after all of these years.

Dun Laoghaire Courthouse

I was delighted to work closely with Dun Laoghaire Business Improvement District and local solicitors to oppose the closure of Dun Laoghaire Courthouse.



Dun Laoghaire Golf Guide Awards

Congratulations to Dún Laoghaire Golf Club on winning Golfers' Guide to Ireland 'Best Parkland and Links 2015' Golf Club Awards. Dun Laoghaire Golf Club will host the International Women's Curtis Cup Golfing Competition.

Glenalbyn Pool

I have written to the CEO of the Council and will continue to push for this important recreational facility.

Sandycove to Sutton Cyclepath

I have had a number of meetings with the Minister for Transport, Sport and Tourism, Paschal Donohoe to try and progress the S2S Cyclepath.

Dún Laoghaire Business Improvement District

The Sunday Business Post and Dún Laoghaire Business Improvement District are hosting a conference on "The Future of Towns in Ireland" on April 16th. Register here: <http://futureoftowns.com/members/>



I work with local businesses and their Business Associations to ensure our towns and villages are vibrant.

This year I will be hosting the following public conferences that I hope you will attend:

1. Obesity, How we can create a Healthier Ireland, March 2,
2. Role of the new Charity Regulation Authority, March 12,
3. End of Life Care, TBC
4. Social Media for SMEs, TBC

Please check my website, www.marymittelloconnor.ie for further details.



Mary Ainscough, Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD and Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre



Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD, Cllr. Patricia Stewart and Dún Laoghaire Business Improvement District Members

PROPOSED GREENWAY CORNELSCOURT TO CHERRYWOOD

I am in favour of extra facilities and resources for walking, cycling and greater connectivity. However it is imperative that residents feel safe and secure and that their properties are not negatively impacted upon. I have urged the Council to give strong consideration to Residents' concerns.

PROPOSED ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME FOR CROSS AVENUE, BOOTERSTOWN

After making strong representations to the Council, I am pleased to see the Council have proposed this Scheme in response to the unfortunate traffic accident which occurred on Cross Avenue last year. I have urged the Council to give strong consideration to Residents' and Parents' feedback. If you are concerned about safety issues outside your child's school, please contact me.

FINE GAEL IN GOVERNMENT - DELIVERING FOR YOU

- Over 80,000 jobs have been created since 2011
- Reduced income tax & the USC for the first time in 6 years
- Unemployment down from 15.1% to 10.6%

- Exited the EU/IMF bailout as planned, without a new precautionary credit line
- New school spending and maintaining core social welfare rates

BLACKROCK CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

My constituency office is open Monday – Friday and located over Insomnia on 24 Main Street, Blackrock. If you have any queries, or need assistance on a local/national matter, please call 01-2109161. I can also meet you in your home if you have difficulty travelling.

MARY MITCHELL O'CONNOR TD

If you have a concern or issue you would like to discuss with Mary or are seeking help or advice please contact Mary.

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Your Fine Gael Team working with Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD

Cllr. John Bailey, Cllr. Maria Bailey, Cllr. Marie Baker, Cllr. Mary Fayne, Cllr. Pat Hand, Cllr. Josepha Madigan, Cllr. Brian Murphy, Cllr. Neale Richmond, Cllr. Barry Saul, Cllr. Patricia Stewart, Cllr. Barry Ward