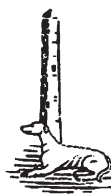




The Kerryman

Est. 1904

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All sides must resolve to settle fire service dispute

THREE fully-trained fire fighters are waiting to be employed in Listowel but cannot take up their positions because of a long-running dispute between officers at the station and their employers, Kerry County Council.

The training of these three officers in highly specialised skills at centres around the country has cost the taxpayers thousands of euros. Yet, because of a failure to iron out a new working arrangement between staff and management

within the service, their training is now going completely to waste and there is a danger they may have to be fully retrained if the dispute is not resolved soon.

An event greater concern in Listowel at the moment concerns staffing levels at the station. As long as the positions remain unfilled the local fire service is understaffed by four bodies in all; with another fire fighter seeking to transfer into Listowel from another station also blocked due to the dispute.

Kerry County Council is emphatic that the current staffing level is adequate to respond to all levels of emergency in the North Kerry area.

However, real concerns remain in Listowel while the station operates with a lower level of staff than it should have. Clearly, it is high time for compromise from both sides in an effort to close this matter once and for all and allow Listowel the level of staffing it should have.

Kerry County Council is seeking a fire service across the county

where it can be guaranteed the availability of a given number of officers in each retained station at all times.

Staff at Tralee and Killarney have already signed up to the system and are fully staffed.

Fire officers in Listowel, meanwhile, are seeking to retain the system to which they are long-accustomed and which, it should be said, has never resulted in any failing on the part of the service there to respond to an emergency.

Listowel Fire Service is a first-rate front-line emergency unit whose members put their own lives on the line to ensure the safety of others. It is unfortunate that such a dispute would affect one of the county's most important services.

It has, however, and if the people of North Kerry are to assured they have a fully staffed fire service to protect them then it is high time both sides in this dispute found common ground and resolved the argument.

Letters to the editor

Send your letters to: The Editor, The Kerryman, Denny Street, Tralee. **Fax:** 066 7145572 **e-mail:** editor@kerryman.ie All letters should include a daytime telephone number for the purpose of verification. It is editorial policy not to publish anonymous letters.

Kilconly reunion a brilliant night for old school pals

Sir, In 1967, along with thousands of my peers, I left Ireland to seek gainful employment on another shore. One thing permanently retained in my memories was my formative school years, filled with happy and some not so happy times spent in the poor but caring environment of Bromore, Ballybunion. Often I wondered what had become of others whose company I shared in Kilconly National School.

So, along with 200 other ex pupils on August 13, I returned to North Kerry to jointly reminisce about our shared experiences of a previous Ballybunion and our journeys through life.

To say the evening was a roaring success would be a gross understatement and a disservice to those whose efforts and hard work ensured the reunion covered ex pupils whose attendance dates ranged from 1926

to the present. Memories were shared and people's lives since school were gleefully exchanged with past pupils who were long since unseen but safely secured in our shared memories.

The organisers of this event will never hear the acknowledgement that they truly deserve because it is impossible to put into words the gratitude that their efforts merit. If accolades are issued in North Kerry for hard work and gratitude then the biggest and proudest must go to the Kilconly National School Reunion Committee.

Can I please express a huge public thank you and my gratitude, only tinged by the single regret that the night was far too short.

Sincerely,
Catherine B O'Mahony
(Mrs Sharpe),
Northampton,
England.

Welcome help in hour of need

Sir, I would like to express my very deep appreciation for the wonderful doctors and staff in Kerry General Hospital. I will always be grateful to these wonderful people.

I fell ill in Aughacarla caravan park and I am told that within 20 minutes I was on my way to hospital by ambulance

with a great crew who helped me in my hour of need.

After four days' treatment I was sent home.

To all the people who helped me in any way, can I say 'thank you, thank you, thank you.'

Sincerely,
Jim Desmond,
Upper Fair Hill,
Cork City.



Jedward playing in Ballybunion last week.

Jedward's short Ballybunion gig a let-down for the fans

Sir, I would just like to point out a few issues I had with the Jedward concert in Ballybunion on August 14.

Jedward honoured us with their presence for a little over 30 minutes. I thought they were the main act and not a supporting act - and even the main act didn't play for much longer than Jedward.

My sister and her two children paid €90 for three tickets, which she booked on the previous

Friday. People who bought tickets on the day paid €25 and those of us who stood on the Castle Green (including me) got in for the latter half of the concert (a whole 15 minutes) for free.

Does all this seem reasonable?

Jedward sang 'Lipstick', said 'love you guys' and did a disappearing act right in front of our very eyes. In disbelief we honestly thought they were taking a break and couldn't

believe it when we saw the equipment being moved.

Lucky for me I hadn't paid a bob, but I feel so sorry for all those who had.

Jedward have left themselves down here. I thought they were more people-friendly but it looks like it's just a business now.

Sincerely,
Joan O'Connor,
Castlemahon,
Co Limerick.

Hats off to Knightstown

Sir, I am writing to compliment Knightstown Tidy Towns on the great work done over the August Bank Holiday Weekend.

Valentia Regatta was held on Monday, August 1 and it brought a lot of visitors to the island. Thanks to

Michael Egan and all the workers, the village of Knightstown was perfectly tidy by 9.30am the next morning. Hats off to Knightstown Tidy Towns!

Sincerely,
Linda Lavelle,
San Francisco.

Thanks for an outstanding education

Sir, We would like to thank the Irish educational system for giving our daughter and outstanding education.

Our daughter, Sofia Kolb, visited Presentation Convent, Listowel, three years ago to do a year of transition year. She wanted to improve her English and to experience Irish education. This one-off experience became the stepping stone to doing the Leaving Cert in Ireland. Sofia decided that learning in Ireland was best for her and having to 'catch up' we parents decided to send her to do the Leaving in Brookfield College, Tralee.

In Brookfield, Sofia learnt to learn, to catch up and surprise us all. We wish to thank the

principal, Elisa, and his teaching team for all the support and care they gave to Sofia. Their schooling is all about learning to apply oneself, how to stay balanced mentally and emotionally, and how to get the best out of oneself. Exactly this is what Sofia did and she was rewarded with the best results she could ever have dreamt of. We are proud parents and family.

Despite the crisis, be proud of your educational system and this great resource you have in Ireland.

Sincerely,
Jurgen and Maire Kolb,
Theodor-Heuss Str,
Heilbronn,
Germany.

High price gives chips a bad taste

Sir, I recently attended the Irish Open on one of my many trips to Killarney. At about 11pm I purchased a bag of chips in a local chip shop for €3. I have never seen a sadder or more measly portion of chips in my life.

Citizens of Ireland work it out - almost €3 Sterling for a diminutive portion of deep fried spuds! You are being ripped off with your take-away prices. It would have been cheaper to go back to the Lake Hotel for chips - and better!

Sincerely,
Joe Kelsall,
4 Spring Gardens,
Maghull,
Liverpool L31 3HA.
(Ex Flemings Lane resident 65 years ago).