



Gleannsharoon on the Cusp of Development by Kerry County Council – Cllr. Bobby O’Connell

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Cllr. Bobby O’Connell pictured amid the Kerry County Council created rubble dumped at Gleannsharoon and inset: the view from the area on a more obliging day. ©Photographs: John Reidy.

The long running saga of the soon-to-be called Gleannsharoon Viewing Park got another airing at this week’s meeting of Kerry County Council. Only this time the air was warm with positivity and promise.

A motion by Cllr. Bobby O’Connell urged: That Kerry County Council give immediate priority to the viewing area at Dooneen, Gleannsharoon, Castleisland as it is of vital importance to Kerry.

Reply: Plans are currently being finalised for the viewing area at Dooneen, Gleannsharoon, Castleisland with a view to carrying out the works towards the end of February.

These plans involve the upgrade and enhancement of the viewing area with hard and soft landscaping. Kerry county Council intend to carry out these works towards the end of February.

Con Houlihan and Bertie Ahern Admired It

Con Houlihan loved it and it showed in the way he wrote about it; Bertie Ahern looked forward to seeing it and spoke accordingly of it.

After a public utterance on the beauty of the vista by Bertie on a visit to Kerry, Con Houlihan quipped: “It isn’t near as pleasing to him as seeing Fine Gael on the opposition benches in Dáil Éireann,”

Cllr. Bobby O’Connell is a self confessed ranter about it’s charms – in any kind of weather – and campaigned to have it cleaned up and given its due respect. He places the movement of the project and the due praise at the door of Angela McAllen – Kerry County Council’s Head of Finance.

Now, Cllr. O’Connell is on the cusp of having the ‘viewing park’ at Gleansharoon cleaned up and developed. He has channelled his ire on Kerry County Council over the years – on the very body to which he has been elected continuously since 1991.

The Brow of the Hill

We’re biased here of course but we all think that the view from Gleannsharoon is the best in the world. And it is in so many ways and it certainly is to us. We know we’re home once we hit the brow of that hill. From there we can roll on down into our little valley.

Chicago born, Castleisland reared, Cllr. O’Connell took Kerry County Council’s abuse of the scenic area as a personal insult to him and his constituents.

It is, after all, the first real glimpse of the beauty of Kerry. People will point out that there are finer and more scenic views elsewhere in the county – and there probably are – but not if you’re an Islander.

Menu of Insults

Apart from anything else on the menu of insults on the population of the area, the park overlooks the nearby land from which his paternal ancestors emerged.

“With the way things have changed in recent years and the way the electoral boundaries are now, that stuff you see dumped there is probably from Tralee or Killarney,” said Mayor O’Connell.

“You wouldn’t see the likes of that in Aghadoe or anywhere in Tralee and yet it all seems OK for them to come out and dump the leftover road material here beside one of the first and finest views of a county so dependent on tourism,” said Mayor O’Connell.

Great Potential

“On a fine day here you’d often see a dozen cars or more pulled in and people out taking photographs of the view from here. To see the place treated like this is all wrong and I’m glad that it’s not going to go any further. The place has great potential for the whole county and it’s a shame to see it treated like this,” said O’Connell.

To be fair to all the eyes of all the beholders: Cllr Mick Gleeson also proposed, during the summer of 2012, that the area be taken in hand and developed. He too spoke about its importance and relevance to the whole county and its Gateway to Kerry status.

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