

## Can You Afford to be Rural? - A Public Debate

Everyone has been hit by the continuous rise in the cost of living, especially the high cost of fuel. However, for people in rural areas the impact is particularly disproportionate. Rural dwellers are not in the position of choice as the option of using public transport is not there. For already isolated people, the only way to save is to reduce the use of the vehicle to essential use only. This will lead to further isolation and restriction of; lifestyle, access to services and employment opportunities.

The high cost of fuel is due to the worldwide increase of crude oil prices but this is further burdened with high tax - two thirds of the cost of fuel at the pump is attributable to tax. No one can have any effect on the cost of a barrel of crude oil, but our Government could ease the burden by reducing the tax or providing some form of concessionary support to rural dwellers.

To enable rural people to raise the issues impacting on their lives, a Public Debate was held on the morning of Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June in Antrim Civic Centre. The debate was in the form of a Q&A session and the panel included Dr William McCrea MP MLA; Mr Tommy Burns MLA; Wilbert Mayne UFU; Siobhan Doherty Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN), Cllr Adrian Cochran-Watson, Mayor Antrim Borough Council and Mr Michael Hughes Rural Community Network (RCN). The session was hosted by South Antrim Rural Network in Partnership with Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network and Rural Community Network

The event was followed by a conference to explore the need for a Northern Ireland Rural Champion and all the issues raised during the conference will be used to inform DARD as to the need for such a role.

## Minister Michelle Gildernew MP MLA has announced the initial allocations of funding from the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013

£50million will be allocated across the seven council clusters and they will now begin the process of developing rural development strategies to identify actions that will support improvements to the quality of life in rural areas and the diversification and development of the rural economy. After they have been competitively assessed a further £50m will be allocated across the clusters.

Outlining the announcement the Minister said: "This initial portion was allocated to the council clusters on the basis of their rural population weighted by deprivation. This money will help the council clusters to make a real difference in delivering on the big issues that cut across all rural communities".

### Cluster Allocation

- North East 6,211,991
- North West 11,259,048
- Mid Ulster 12,721,715
- Craigavon 9,570,714
- Down 6,592,695
- Antrim 1,793,712
- Lisburn 1,850,124

## WOMEN AND THE CONFLICT – Streets less safe since Troubles ended, say women

The streets of Northern Ireland are more dangerous now than at the height of the Troubles, a major new survey of women's opinions has found. Women fear drugs, knife crime, happy-slapping, attacks on older people and attacks on women and felt that "ordinary" crime is worse now than during the conflict. "Overall, there was a sense that it was "safer on the streets" during the conflict than now," explained Margaret Ward of the Women's Centres' Regional Partnership (WCRP), which carried out the research into Women and the Troubles. This new report *Women in Conflict: Talking about the Troubles and Planning for the Future* was unveiled at a conference on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June, at the Glenavon Hotel in Cookstown attended by internationally renowned author Cynthia Cockburn.



Cynthia Cockburn speaking at the Women in the Conflict Conference

Over the past two years, 120 women from across the province have given in-depth interviews about how their lives and communities were affected by the violence here and the continuing impact of the paramilitaries. The WCRP will now address policymakers to tell them what women want for the future of Northern Ireland. "There are many issues that still need to be dealt with from the legacy of the conflict. Issues such as mental health and community breakdown are hugely important for the future of our communities," said Margaret.

The WCRP project, funded by CFNI under the Peace II 2.4 measure, involved ten women's groups including: Windsor Women's Centre, Greenway Women's Centre, Larne Women's group, Corpus Christi, Relatives for Justice, Galbally Women's Group in South Tyrone, Carrickfergus Women's Forum, Forkhill Women's Group and Derry Shared City project, which includes two mixed religion groups.

## PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

### PROCUREMENT BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Do you have the drive and passion to make a real contribution to the successful development and implementation of public sector procurement in Northern Ireland? The Department of Finance and Personnel is seeking to appoint two external members to the Procurement Board for Northern Ireland which is responsible for the development, dissemination and coordination of public procurement policy and practice for the Northern Ireland public sector. The Board meets twice yearly and on ad hoc occasions as deemed necessary.

The appointments will be for an initial term of 3 years from 1 October 2008 and, if reappointed, will be restricted to 2 terms. Appointees will receive a fee of £450 per day. The post will require a commitment of at least 2 business days per year.

**How to Apply** An application pack can be obtained from Central Procurement Directorate on 028 9081 6556 or by writing to: Mr P Caughey, Procurement Board Secretariat, Central Procurement Directorate, 2nd Floor East, Clare House, 303 Airport Road West, Belfast, BT3 9ED or email: [paul.caughey@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:paul.caughey@dfpni.gov.uk)

Completed application forms must be returned in **hard copy** to the above address by **12.00 Noon on 17 July 2008**. Interviews are scheduled to take place in Clare House, Belfast on 27 August 2008.

**The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.**

As females are currently under-represented on the Procurement Board, applications from women would be particularly welcome.

### NORTHERN IRELAND POSTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) is seeking a Chair and up to 5 members for appointment to the Northern Ireland Postal Services Committee, a committee of the new National Consumer Council, which is being created under new legislation.

This is a significant and exciting opportunity to play a key role in setting up and developing a new consumer advocacy and representation body. The closing date for applications is 7th August 2008

For further information please email [RDHV@saxbam.com](mailto:RDHV@saxbam.com) or call 01483 409700

### OTHER PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

**NI TOURIST BOARD** - Up to 6 Board Members required.

**GENERAL CONSUMER COUNCIL** - 1 Chair and 2 x Board Members required (For either of these appointments contact Margaret Aiken on **028 9052 9444** or email: [margaret.aiken@detini.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.aiken@detini.gov.uk))

**CHARITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE** - 2 x Board Members required. (Contact Susan Calwell on **028 9082 9481** or email [susan.calwell@dsdni.gov.uk](mailto:susan.calwell@dsdni.gov.uk))

For a complete list of current Public Appointments please contact the **Central Appointments Unit**

**Tel: 028 9052 8192 Fax: 028 9052 8125**

**E-mail: [admin.cau@ofmdfmi.gov.uk](mailto:admin.cau@ofmdfmi.gov.uk)**

**Web: [www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/public-appointments](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/public-appointments)**

## MAKE YOURS AS WARM AS TOAST

**The Warm Homes Scheme is funded by the Department for Social Development and managed by eaga plc. It is aimed at private sector housing only, i.e. those who are owner occupiers or who rent their homes from private landlords.** The insulation measures that are available under the scheme include:

- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Reflective Radiator Panels (solid walls only)
- Loft insulation
- Draught proofing to windows and doors
- Hot Water Tank Jackets
- Compact Fluorescent Lamps
- Energy Advice



A grant of £850 is available for the installation of these measures. There are three main groups of householders who are eligible for the insulation measures.

These include householders of any age who have a child under the age of 16 and who are in receipt of certain benefits; householders under the age of sixty who are in

receipt of certain disability related benefits and householders who are 60 years and over and are in receipt of certain specified benefits:

As well as the insulation measures householders of 60 and over are also eligible for the following heating measures:

- Conversion of an existing bottled gas, solid fuel central heating system or Economy 7 to oil or natural gas
- Installation of a new fully controllable, energy efficient oil or gas central heating system
- Repair/upgrade of an existing oil/natural gas central heating system

The total grant available in this instance for both insulation and heating measures is £4,300.

**For more information or to register on the Warm Homes Scheme, please contact eaga plc on Freephone 0800 181 667.**

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