

3 CLARE PROJECTS NOMINATED TO PARTICIPATE IN PRIDE OF PLACE 2007

County Clare, IRELAND, 5th July 2007 - Three Clare communities are gearing themselves for the judging stage of Cooperation Ireland's annual Pride of Place Competition 2007, which takes place early next week.

Earlier this year, Clare County Council nominated the recently opened Michael Cusack Centre in Carron along with Kilmihil Community Development Ltd. and the RAPID Project at Cloughleigh will participate in the All-Ireland competition, which aims to recognise and celebrate the vital contributions that community groups make to society.

Pride of Place, first piloted in the summer of 2003, came from the Local Authority All-Island Steering Forum - a forum that encourages strategic, sustainable approaches to cross border co-operation. Since 2003, the following communities in Clare have taken part: Kilrush, Kilkee, Ennis, Labasheeda, Shannon, Sixmilebridge, Ballynacally, Scariff, and O'Briensbridge/Montpelier.

Commenting on the nominations, Cllr. Patricia McCarthy (Ind), Chairperson of the Environment, Emergency Services & Consumer Protection Strategic Policy Committee, "We were pleased with the quality of responses we received from our call to community groups and organisations to participate in this year's competition. The depth and breath of voluntary activity underway in communities across county Clare was very evident in the applications received. We are confident that the nominated projects best represent these efforts and look forward to County Clare achieving success in the competition."

Cllr. McCarthy added, "This competition focuses on local communities, both north and south of the border, coming together to shape, change and enjoy all that is good about their area. Groups have the opportunity to network, exchange ideas and learn from others and further promote their activities."

The organisers of the All-Ireland contest have changed the structure of this year's competition to include new categories for villages with a population of less than 200 people and towns with a population of over 5,000 people.

Each Local Authority can nominate up to five towns in the population-based categories, of which there are six. Category 1 caters for villages of up to 200 people, category 2 is for population centres of 200-500 people, category 3 features towns and villages with a population of between 500-1000 people, category 4 is for centres of between 1000-2000 people, category 5 includes centres of between 2000-5000 people, and category 6 caters for towns and cities with a population in excess of 5,000.

Meanwhile, 'Pride of Place 2007' features a separate category entitled 'Single Issue Project'. Entries that have been successful in recent years have concentrated on themes such as Childcare Provision, Community Service Outreach, Heritage, Disabled Provision, Third Age Provision, Community Amenity, Estate Management, Social Integration, Suburban Regeneration, Inter-Community Relations and Care of the Environment.

Ms. Nicola Cullinan, Pride of Place Co-Coordinator added, "The competition offers communities the opportunity to showcase the positive contribution that local groups make to the overall enhancement of their localities. This year, we received expressions of interest from all over the County. We now look forward to cooperating with the nominees with their preparations ahead of the judging season."

Judging for 'Pride of Place 2007' will take place 9th and 10th July 2007. The awards ceremony will be held on 10th November 2007 in Westport, Co Mayo. The winners in each category will receive an exclusive crystal decorative memento, along with a cheque for EUR2,000. The runners up for each category will receive a framed certificate and a cheque for EUR500.00. The recipients of special awards will receive a crystal memento.

Judging itinerary:

Michael Cusack Centre (Category 7) - Monday 9th July from 10.00 - 12.30

Kilmihil Community Development Ltd. (Category 2) - Monday 9th July from 2-4pm Ennis

Rapid Community Assembly (Category 7) - Tuesday 10th July 2007 from 9.30am to 12.00noon