

People Before Profit Alliance



Tralee Newsletter

Fight to Save Services at Kerry General Hospital

Kerry General Hospital is being systematically run down by the HSE.

The hospital is now facing an even deeper crisis with outpatients' clinics closing for six weeks every year.

Annagh Ward is closing at weekends, with staff there being given only 24 hours to accept or transfer.

The slim hopes that the recommendations in the Vision for Change report of January 2006 on the future of Mental Health policy in Ireland were dealt a devastating blow when €1,000,000 was knocked off the budget in Kerry.

In the A&E, growing numbers of patients of all ages and all conditions are put on trolleys often for more than 24 hours due to the bed crisis at the hospital. As if this wasn't enough, there still is no Diabetic consultant and proper Renal treatment.

The Cardiology unit is significantly under-resourced, while the Angiography service which provides x-rays of blood vessels was closed down three years ago. The removal of Cancer Care services means that ill patients have to make a round-trip to Cork to be treated.

Only recently has a Breast-Check Facility been announced. We need adequately funded health care at our hospital.

The crisis at Kerry General Hospital is caused to a large extent by the chronic shortage in staff numbers. This is what Michael Dineen the INO local repre-



sentative had to say on this issue:

"The nursing shortages within Kerry General Hospital are so acute that they pose a daily challenge to our members in their efforts to deliver a safe and appropriate level of care to the patients in their charge ... the only option to them at this juncture is to curtail services".

All this is part Harney's cuts in the health budget and crazy policy of co-location of private hospitals next to public ones. She has now cut a further €1.1 Billion off the health budget and is directly responsible for the needless pain and suffering large numbers of people in Tralee are having to put up with.

The argument that People Before Profit are putting forward is simple.

We need to fight back in the way the old age pensioners did, and won, over the medical card issue. It was their courageous resistance to Harney that has inspired the more general protest movement which we see against the Fianna Fail-Green government today. People power can win.

We should get rid of this ridiculous two-tier health system and replace it with a free universal health service. Privatising elements of the health service is not an intelligent solution: we want world-class public health care.

People Before Profit is a new political party established to fight for retaining your Public Services and opposing Cutbacks.

We are standing a dozen candidates nationally.

Sean Moraghan, a shop worker in Tralee is standing for Tralee Town Council in the local elections to be held June 5th of this year

This is a chance to express our opposition to the coming cutbacks and service charges that we will be facing in Tralee.

This is an opportunity to ask: "Why do WE have to pay for THEIR crisis?" A crisis caused by establishment politicians, the banks, and property developers



Budget:

ATTACKS ON PAYE WORKERS TO SUPPORT BANKS

The government's projection to raise an extra €1.8 billion in taxes this year means that 81 percent of this will come from us. Only €26 million is raised through increases in Capital Gains or Capital Acquisition Tax.

There are no cutbacks on special tax breaks for the pensions of company directors. There is no change in the status of Tax Exiles who, despite their calls to 'patriotism', claim to reside outside Ireland for part of the year to avoid paying taxes here.

The main groups who will suffer are lower and middle PAYE workers. A single worker on a gross wage of €30,000 a year will lose €900 a year, or €17.30 a week.

If they had the misfortune to be a worker in the public sector they were hit by an additional pension levy.

Yet despite these shocking attacks, there was no Budget levy on wealth. Companies who benefit from one of the lowest

Corporation profit tax rates in Europe were not asked for an levy on profit.

AN ATTACK ON THE POOR

Before the budget was announced, Fianna Fail and the Greens sent out signals that they would not touch Social Welfare payments. In fact, they reduced these payments by 2% by abolishing the Christmas bonus. Pensioners, the unemployed, and those of disability will suffer from this miserable attack. Many will be forced to go to money lenders over Christmas.

The government also attacked the young by halving their benefits. The aim is to encourage them to emigrate, or work for poor wages.

On top of this many parents will see their mortgage relief wiped out entirely after seven years. This is in sharp contrast to landlords and investors who will only be able to claim 75% of the rental income for

tax purposes – but who can continue to claim beyond seven years.

THE BANKS ARE THE BIG WINNERS

The real purpose of the budget is to siphon money off PAYE workers to help save the banks.

Estimates put the cost of subsidising the banks at €20 billion. This is the total the government has pledged to raise in tax hikes and cuts over the next five years.

Even if the state took the banks' bad debts over at a discount price of 40%, this will still double the national debt to €108 billion. The size of this debt and the worry about a default will increase the 'at risk' cost of borrowing. So in the immediate future, the bail out schemes for the banks will push up the cost of Irish state borrowing to about €1 billion extra a year.

In other words, most of the money raised in levies on PAYE workers is helping to fund the bank bail outs.

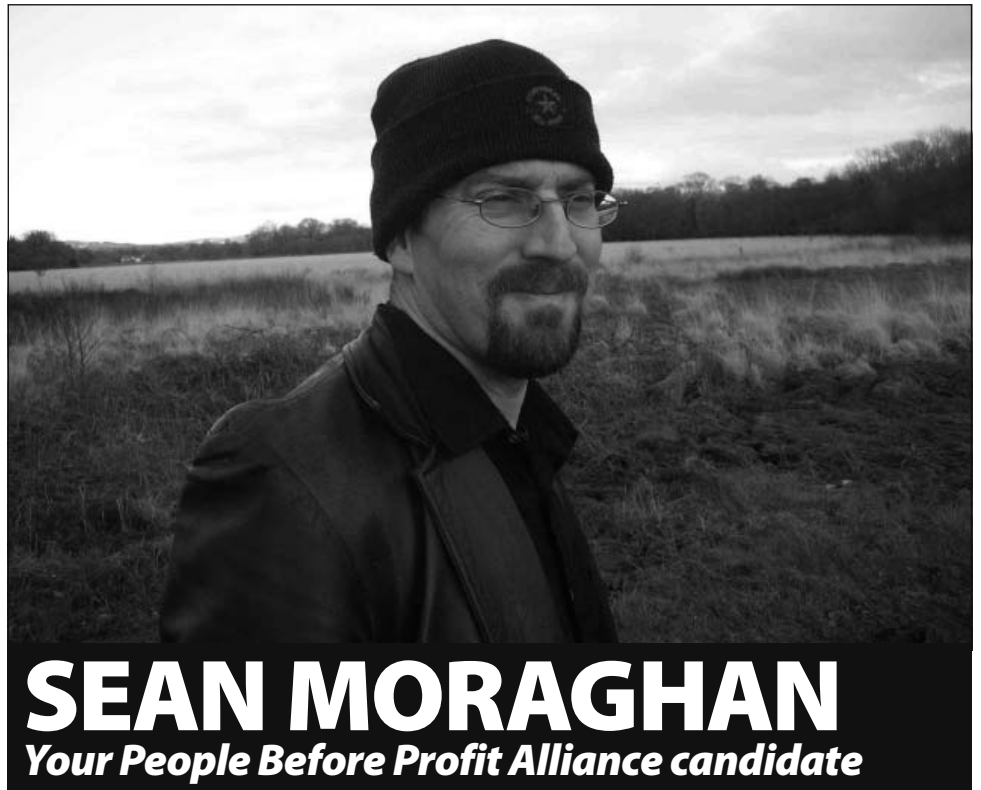
VOTE FOR CHANGE on June 5th

"People Before Profit (Tralee) has been involved in helping to oppose residential Car Parking charges in the St John's Park area, has taken part in the protest at withdrawal of Cancer Services at Kerry General Hospital, went up to Cork for the Education Demonstration, and attended the 100,000 strong march in Dublin by workers against the Public Service Levy. PbP also organised a protest in Tralee against Israel's horrific assault on Gaza.

The coming local election on June 5th gives us an opportunity to move from street protests to mounting a campaign based on two simple concepts: "Why do WE have to pay for THEIR crisis?" And, lets find a better way to live, and work, together.

Tralee is facing cutbacks to health care and education, the prospect of local authority service charges, reductions in facilities like crèches and home-helps, and a workforce reeling under job losses, a wage levy, and, for public service workers, a so-called Pension Levy.

If we are to oppose those measures, voters have to think about withdrawing support for the political parties and candidates who implement or support those actions. We need to build opposition to those poli-



SEAN MORAGHAN
Your People Before Profit Alliance candidate

cies. We need spokespeople who will voice public anger. In short, we need People Before Profit and a seat on Tralee Town Council. What that will give us is a public platform from which to denounce the cutbacks, and to try and argue for different solutions, and a different kind

of society and economy. And it will send a signal to Fianna Fail and their brother and sisters, Fine Gael, that the era of Right-wing economic policies, those policies that have brought us to national ruin and local crisis, is over."--- **Sean Moraghan** www.pbptralee.com