

2007 Policy Document

A message from Jackie

I've been a member of Kerry County Council and the Southern Health Board for over 30 years. I've been fortunate to serve the people of South Kerry for 10 years in the Dáil. I have given a lifetime of service to local and national politics. I earnestly seek your continued support.

Yours Sincerely,
Jackie Healy-Rae TD

The Health System

The most common complaint that I am hearing from people in the constituency is with regard to the health system. With all the coverage in the newspapers and television, everyone knows we have huge problems with it. Regardless of who is to blame there are urgent matters that must be immediately addressed here in South Kerry.

These are;

Upgrading of our local hospitals

Provision of mental health day-care centres in the constituency

Breast Cancer Screening service for all women

Provision of a sexual assault unit for Kerry General Hospital

Availability of MRI scans in Kerry General Hospital

Overseas sex offenders to be registered in Ireland

More support in home care of the elderly and incapacitated

Increased payments to those involved in Home Help

The long waiting lists for consultants is unacceptable. I want to see seven day availability by consultants and more efficient use of the expensive equipment in Kerry General Hospital

People who hold G.P. Visit Cards should be given full medical cards

Additional support is needed for South Doc

We must strive to reduce the problems of MRSA in our hospitals

Reduce the waiting time for results of smear testing

and lastly I want to make it clear that I stand firmly behind the nurses in supporting the I.N.O. demands

Young Drivers

The high proportion of young drivers being killed on our roads is frightening and must be a constant worry to parents. I will do my level best to have driving education/training introduced in second level schools. I also want to see the waiting time for the Driving Test reduced.

Night Clubs

The Gardaí in Tralee are already seeing the benefits of the earlier closing of night clubs. I want to see the same being done for Killarney and throughout the constituency.

Local Authority

Despite the surplus of money by the government, many areas still lack basic essentials such as affordable housing, playgrounds and even a grave yard.

I will be pressing for the following amenities;

More Local Authority houses needed to cater for our ever

increasing waiting list

The Local Authority should enable the developers to provide Affordable Housing as set out in Part 5 of the Planning Act 2001

Provision of more affordable sites

Provision of more playgrounds

Provision of a grave yard for Killarney

Provision of a grave yard for Cromane

Tourism

Here in South Kerry we are hugely dependent on the tourist industry.

The recent problems in Galway should make us sit up and get more active and vocal in ensuring that South Kerry remains one of Ireland's most popular tourist destinations. I want to see;

More effort to be made at local and national level to solve the problem of access for hill walkers. The issue of compensating landowners must be resolved

Direct financial support for marketing tourism

Restoration of Cork/Swansea ferry

Support the continued expansion of Kerry Airport

Fishing Industry

What should be one of the country's greatest assets has suffered years of being used as a bargaining chip and being under-funded. It's high time we got behind our fishing industry and protected this important resource for the future.

Income Tax

With increased money in government coffers and the recent job losses

I want to see;

A reduction in income tax so as to help increase employment

- a point I highlighted last November

Increase Disability Allowance

Increase Social Welfare

Car Parking

With the huge increase in the number of cars on the road, car parking is becoming a major problem in all our towns. I want to see a reintroduction of tax incentives for those providing car parking facilities.

Roads

The government has failed to keep our road network abreast of the increasing number of cars. There are urgent works needed to relieve the daily traffic congestion. In Kerry we have more miles of National Secondary Roads than any other county, therefore we need more money for county and local roads, especially projects that need to be undertaken immediately including;

The gateways to the county must be improved to allow easier access. Urgent works include: the Rathmore/Killarney road;

the link road from Castlough to Lissivigeen and the Lissivigeen/Farranfore road; the Castleisland by-pass

Improvement to cul-de-sac roads

More funding for Local Improvement Scheme roads

Major funding needed for Killarney town roads
- the Muckcross Road in particular is in a disgraceful state
Urgent funding needed for sewerage and water schemes
throughout the constituency to allow for development
and to safeguard our rivers, lakes and seas
Lastly, our Local Authority should get back to basics and
cut hedges and clear dykes

Jobs

South Kerry is no different from the rest of Ireland in that most of our manufacturing jobs are moving out. It is difficult to compete with the low level of wages in areas such as Eastern Europe and the Far East. We urgently need support from the IDA for large and small to medium sized enterprises in the constituency and this must be backed up with a proper roll-out of broadband in the county.

Agriculture

Like our fishing industry, the farming sector has suffered greatly in recent times. Poor prices for products and ever increasing regulations mean more and more farmers are forced to seek part time or full time work elsewhere. There are number of measures I want to see introduced to elevate the plight of farmers. For example;
An end to unannounced farm inspections
The continuation of the live export of cattle and sheep out of Ireland
An increase in the Installation Grant for young farmers
Dairy farmers must get a fair price for milk

Planning Permission

Provision of planning permission continues to be a problem, further changes are necessary in the County Development Plan and I also want to see an improvement in the efficiency of delivering planning permission.

Education

Having our young people educated is vital. It is the best investment we can make for their futures, for attracting industry to the country and for ensuring that Ireland continues to enjoy economic growth. An insurance for all our futures. I want to do my level best to help these young people with such bright futures. Some of the measures I have in mind are;
No reintroduction of college fees
Fees in relation to Master Degrees should be abolished
Introduction of free travel for 3rd level students
Retention of Shrone School
Special needs teaching hours - Extra consideration must be given to students who require additional help. The process for allocating these hours needs to be tightened up also, to avoid the possibility of some children slipping through the educational loophole. All teaching hours allocated for this purpose should be continued until the child finishes secondary education.
Physical Education - The basic facilities and training required for the provision of a comprehensive, balanced and health-promoting physical education programme needs to be prioritised. Many schools do not have sports halls or sufficient space to provide for

this integral area of education. The level of obesity in school-going children reflects this gaping lack in facilities.

Reduced class sizes - Extra teachers have been employed in the special needs area but more are needed to reduce pupil/teacher ratios and consequently improve the quality of teaching and learning. It stands to reason that the teacher cannot tend to the needs of all students if the number in class is too large.

Micro-Funding for schools - Parents should not have to fork out for administrative expenses in the form of an annual payment (often up to €300) to cover photocopying and other miscellaneous expenses.

This is essentially a stealth tax and schools should be funded directly in this case. Extra funding should also be made available in grant form for the purchase of buses, lockers, jerseys and any other essentials, which are invariably paid for by fund raising events run by parents.

I fully support the INTO demands for a reduction in teacher/pupil ratio

Alternative Energy

With the number of recent reports on Global Warming it's obvious that we need to take immediate action to save our country and our planet for our children and their children. I fully support the increasing use of alternative energy. While we don't want to take from the visual beauty of South Kerry, there are more areas of the constituency where we could have wind farms.

There is certainly a need to increase the zoning for them. In the areas that are currently zoned, planning permission should be streamlined and a favourable bias towards them. I also want to see improved grant aid for all other forms of alternative energy.

Child Care

The days when all the fathers went out to work and all the mothers stayed at home to rear the children are long gone. With huge mortgages many mothers have little choice but find employment. There is an urgent need to ease this burden by increasing the Childcare Allowance and allowing tax relief for parents who have children in creches or who choose to stay at home to care for their children.

A few final points

There are a number of issues that don't fall easily into any category but they are problems that I have been very involved with and for which I will continue to work towards finding solutions.

Problems such as;

Increased funding to Irish Emigrants

More financial support to help repatriate Irish in Britain

Good communications are essential these days. It is vital that we have broadband available throughout the constituency. In areas such as the Black Valley and Lauragh good landline and mobile services are urgently needed. The Inny Valley is another problem area, the telephone service here must be improved.

More and more of our rural post offices are being closed. I will do my level best to protect this essential service in our villages and towns.

I will continue to find a replacement for the Post Office at the Park Road, Killarney.

It is extremely important that the uncertainty about stamp duty be ended **NOW**.

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