

The Southern Star

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Update sought on Protective Services Unit for Bandon

An up-to-date progress report on the provision of the Protective Services Unit due to be provided in Bandon was sought in the Dáil by Fianna Fáil Deputy Margaret Murphy O'Mahony. "I was promised that it would be up and running by the end of 2017," she said. "That became 2018 and now one month into 2019 I still do not have a date. When he visits Cork South-West, will the Minister (Charles Flanagan) meet the West Cork Women Against Violence Project to discuss this important issue?"

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan said the West Cork Garda division covers a large area from the sea to the N72 which includes Millstreet, Macroom and even communities in east Kerry. "The specialist protective services unit was part of the division's policing plan," he said. "Will the Minister accelerate the decision in order that the communities of north and west Cork can be served?"

In reply, Minister Flanagan said he did not have a start date with me but he would be happy to communicate by way of giving an update to both Deputies in writing.

GAA plays pivotal in lives and hearts of Irish people

The GAA played, and continues to play, a pivotal role in the lives and hearts of Irish people and in Irish culture, the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, Senator Denis O'Donovan, told the Upper House. Welcoming the President of the GAA John Horan to the Seanad, the Bantry-based Cathaoirleach said it is about building a sense of community and identity at both local and national level.

"It reflects society in a very real way," he said. "It was in recognition of the GAA's influential role and impact on all aspects of Irish life and culture that we invited Mr. Horan to address Seanad Éireann. The grassroots of the GAA can be found in every town and village, in every school and parish in this country and, indeed, beyond. The thousands of volunteer men and women around the country play a vital role in the GAA."

Coming as I do from the great county of Cork, the rebel county, Senator O'Donovan said he was sure Mr Horan would will forgive him if he made reference to some iconic names from the rebel county." I am thinking of the great hurler, Christy Ring, the great ladies footballer and camogie player, Rena Buckley and I cannot forget our famous former Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, who graced Croke Park in both codes," he said.

"In my capacity as a junior player - I was never great but I loved the game - I played for my home club Muintir Bháire but I was fortunate, having emigrated for almost three years, to have played in New Eltham in south-east London, a long trip from where we lived in north London, and to have attended the opening of, and played in, the new Ruislip stadium," he said. "Reflecting further on the greats I also had the privilege of seeing the great John Doyle, Jimmy Doyle and Tony Doran of Wexford play, as well as Eddie Keher, Ollie Walsh and Henry Shefflin, of more modern times."

"I am even told that flaunting a GAA medal in a hotly contested Seanad election can yield a few more votes," he added.

Lack of services hindering growth of West Cork

On paper, the Cork South-West constituency is a great place to live and do business, Deputy Margaret Murphy O'Mahony told the Dáil. For small and medium-sized enterprises, it offers close proximity to Cork Airport and two good third level educational facilities. However, the lack of proper high-speed broadband and mobile coverage was a major drawback for anyone looking to set up a home or business in West Cork.

Even where cable is being laid, there seems to be a lack of consistency, she said. "I know of one case at a crossroads where one house is getting the service but the house opposite is not," she said. "The cable is not being laid for it for some reason. I have submitted several parliamentary questions to the Minister's Department recently dealing with the roll-out of broadband but I have received generic answers to specific queries and cases. Perhaps the Minister could look into it."