

Judge says incidents a 'terrible tragedy'



Judge Tom O'Donnell: an appalling situation that young people in Scanlan Park are at each others throats

By LEADER REPORTER

THERE is a genuine difficulty between some neighbours living in Scanlan Park, Inspector John Murphy told Judge Tom O'Donnell during a series of criminal cases concerning allegations and counter-allegations by neighbours in Castleconnell.

"A lot of it is petty, but it's got to the stage where it's next to impossible to control. There is someone coming to the Garda station nearly everyday, about threats, abuse and gestures," said Insp Murphy, who prosecuted the eight separate cases.

Judge O'Donnell said he was "flabbergasted" that all the people involved in all the charges to come before the court lived in the same neighbourhood.

He called out the names of 15 young people from Scanlan Park who were all before the

court on charges relating to one family in Scanlan Park, the Mocketts.

The charges stemmed from allegations at a debs dance and continued with incidents on a number of dates to last mid-December.

"I'm not stupid. It's not just about the incident at the debs in July. It's a terrible tragedy that there is incident after incident. The debs is supposed to be a great night where young people go with the current loves of their lives for a special night out," said Judge O'Donnell.

He said the charges before the court were "very serious". "They are not the run-of-the-mill public order offences. People could go to prison because of these incidents of insulting behaviour, assaults, dangerous driving and so on.

"I'm extremely concerned that the gardai in Castleconnell have to deal with all of these situations. It has to stop. Common sense must prevail here. Parents

must step in and intervene to resolve this decision.

"It's an appalling situation that young people in Scanlan Park are at each others throats.

Judge O'Donnell said he felt that the young people involved would be far better off forming a strong football team instead of fighting with each other.

He was on the point of adjourning all the cases with liberty to re-enter if anymore incidents arise, when residents of Scanlan Park in the public gallery said they wanted the situation dealt with.

He decided to hear every case on the basis of the comments from residents of Scanlan Park.

Inspt Murphy said the Gardaí would not tolerate the continuation of this "tit-for-tat feud".

Garda P J Joyce of Castleconnell gardai told the court about the difficulties they are having.

"The biggest difficulty we are having is the tit-for-tat between young people. It has led to allegations of assaults and dangerous driving."

Judge O'Donnell said it was fair to say that he had dealt with some of the young people's parents in years gone by. "It's now heading into the next generation."

John Devane, solicitor for the Mocketts, told the court about graffiti on walls about the Mocketts.

Garda Joyce accepted that there had been a lot of graffiti on schools, on doors and on footpaths.

Ted McCarthy, solicitor for the Byrnes family and a number of other people from Scanlan Park, pointed out that there was a divide even in the way residents from Scanlan Park were seated in the courtroom.

Garda Joyce agreed that there was a divide



The quiet village of Castleconnell: Limerick Court spent two days hearing allegations and counter-allegations about incidents between families in the area (LL)

Boy says he was headbutted

By LEADER REPORTER

JUDGE Tom O'Donnell said that it was both a "travesty and tragedy" that so many young people were involved in fighting and feuding in Castleconnell.

"Castleconnell is a lovely pleasant place and it should be a pleasant place to live," said Judge O'Donnell after a full day's hearing on February 14 into various assaults and incidents that happened in the village.

They included allegations of an assault on a 12-year-old boy and his friend who were walking in Scanlan Park when one was headbutted and the other hit in the face.

The juvenile told the court of the incident on December 16 when he was walking in Scanlan park. He called for his friend and they were walking along the road when they were confronted by the accused, Christopher Mockett, 50 Scanlan Park.

He said that Christopher Mockett asked them if they had a problem. He said that "we are hard when we are in cars."

He pushed his friend

boy. He did not fall from the belt.

The injured party said that Mr Mockett hit him with a closed fist in the temple. He said that he then walked back home. He said that they said nothing to warrant the attack.

The 12-year-old said that he was with the previous witness when they saw Christopher Mockett.

"He said to me have you got a staring problem...he said we were hard when in cars," he stated.

He received a heat butt to the forehead which hurt him, but he did not fall. He saw him hit his friend with his fist.

He said that they reported the matter straight away to the gardai.

Answering solicitor John Devane he said that it was not true that they made up the story and they did so because of a "tit for tat" disagreement.

A third witness, a 14 year-old also corroborated evidence of the assault. He said there was marks on his friends faces as a result of the assault.

He also denied to Mr Devane that they made up the story to get his client in trouble. He was not trying to discredit anyone.

asked Mr Devane. "I certainly don't like what is going on" interjected Judge Tom O'Donnell.

Sgt Dave Bourke told the court he received a complaint from the injured parties. He saw them and noticed the marks on their faces. He met the three witnesses who gave similar stories as to what happened.

He went to the accused who denied the allegations. He saw a mark on his forehead but he had no explanation for how he got this mark. He would not make a statement.

Answering Mr Devane, Sgt Bourke said the accused denied the assault. He said that there was a verbal altercation but he walked on.

Christopher Mockett in evidence and answering Mr Devane said that on December 16 he walked out of his house and was heading to the shop when a number of people started shouting at him.

Asked about the mark on his forehead he said that a box or pallet probably fell on him at work.

"Are you seriously asking me to believe that you got the mark from a pallet falling on you at work?"

got black eyes and other injuries at work.

He told Inspector Murphy that the mark on his face could have been from a fall of a box at work.

"It was or it could have been?" asked Inspector Murphy.

"It was" said witness. Asked why he did not make a statement to the gardai, witness said he did not see any point in this case.

"Why do you make statement in some case and not in others?" asked Inspector Murphy.

"There was no point in this case," he answered. Asked how the injured parties could have received marks on their faces he said that there were also fights at the local disco's.

"You have 12-year-old's fighting at disco's?" asked Judge O'Donnell.

"Yes" replied the witness "at the GAA disco." Judge O'Donnell said he was satisfied that the evidence warranted a conviction of Mr Mockett.

The case was adjourned for 12 months with leave to the gardai to re-enter the case in the event of any further trouble. If a conviction on a new charge...