

Refurbish fountain, move Sarsfield and honour John Paul 11 - Cllr Kieran

by Marie Hobbins
marie@limerickpost.ie

A COUNCILLOR'S persistent lobbying for a total refurbishment of the water fountain in the historic John's Square has paid off with work recently commenced to restore the decorative fountain that is seen as a centrepiece.

Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon, who believes that with proper planning John's Square could become very much a focal point, was given a commitment by city manager, Tom Mackey last year that funding would be set aside for the project. That commitment was honoured when an allocation for the work was included in the Estimates for the city in 2007.

Cllr O'Hanlon is pleased that the expertise of Limerick Civic Trust, will be available.

"I am, however, requesting that three ugly stone bins that were erected around the fountain be removed. They are incompatible with the historic monument and out of character - they're also a magnet for people dropping bottles, cigarette butts, sweet papers and rubbish," he said.

The councillor, who is also calling for the eventual pedestrianisation of the square, has recommended

Paul lauds praise on staff at oncology unit

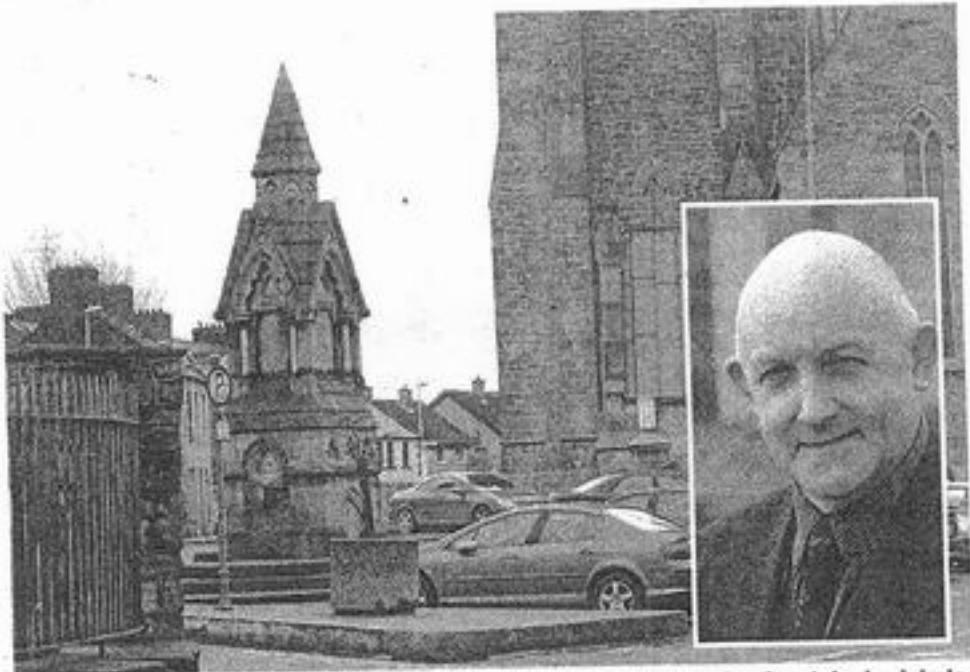
A GROUP of Limerick people, aided by friends and associates, gathered at the Claughaun club on Childers road, last Saturday, to raise much needed funds for the oncology ward at the Mid Western Regional hospital.

The event was an overwhelming success.

The specialist ward, which was opened just over a year ago, is used to treat cancer patients and sufferers greatly appreciate its many benefits.

Before the ward was opened, cancer patients had to travel to Dublin to receive treatment.

Paul O'Connell, a recovered patient, described



Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon's persistent lobbying has ensured that the fountain in John's Square will receive much needed restoration work.

that the bronze statue of Patrick Sarsfield, who so gallantly defended Limerick against the Williamite attack in the siege on the city in 1691, be moved from behind the relative obscurity of a garden area adjoining St John's Cathedral, to a more visible location in John's Square.

Cllr O'Hanlon said that with the restorative work carried out on the former St John of the Cross Church (now Daghdha Space and the home of the city's professional dance company, Daghdha and utilised by other performing arts groups) as well as the state-of-the-art restoration of St John's Cathedral, a restoration of the entire square is timely.

"This old area, so close to the walls of Limerick, the

Irish and English towns, and yet leading on up to the newer part of the city, is steeped in history and with a restored fountain, the relocation of Sarsfield's statue, newly laid cobblestones, seating and floodlighting this could become a hugely attractive area for tourists as well as for locals," he said.

"However, we would have to do something about the Wet House and a number of licences nearby. I've always said that the Wet House should have been located on the grounds of St Joseph's Hospital, and now we have the situation where parents have certain concerns about their children going along to the nearby Scout Hall - they've conveyed these concerns to me. This is a pity, as there is a shortage of youth organisations in

the city and we can't afford to lose any."

Another memorial was also on the councillor's mind.

"I will be asking at next Monday's meeting of Limerick City Council, why there is such a long delay in placing a memorial to the late Pope John Paul 11 in the vicinity of the Cathedral, as was agreed by City Council. Another suitable memorial to the late pope was to be erected in the grounds of the former Limerick Racecourse at Greenpark, and there's no progress on this either."

The issues will be raised at the next monthly meeting of Limerick City Council on Monday, February 26.

Search is on for prettiest of them all

THE search has begun for this year's Rose of Tralee, with the Limerick selection night pencilled in for May 11 and 12, at the Lynch South Court Hotel in Raheen.

Local clubs, societies, associations, businesses, family or friends can nominate a contestant by downloading the entry form from the Rose of Tralee website www.roseoftralee.ie.

The winning Limerick Rose will receive a range of Newbridge Silverware jewellery from the company, who are the lead sponsor of the Rose of Tralee International Festival, as well as a cash prize of 1,000 euro.

As customary, every county in Ireland will select a rose. The winners from Dublin, Cork and Kerry will progress directly to the final in Tralee in August. Thirty roses from all over Ireland will contest the Irish regional final, which will also take place at the Lynch South Court Hotel in Limerick, from June 1-4. This event will be hosted by Ray D'Arcy.

Last year's overall winner was Kathryn Feeney, who represented Queensland. And Limerick was well represented in 2006 by Barrington's private hospital nurse, Mary Sheahan.

A prize worth 25,000 euro to fund a year of travel that includes fares and accommodation, a generous clothes allowance and spending money, Newbridge Silverware.