

Kate Ní Dhubháin

Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne /

Category: News (Interview Based Article Relevant to School) - 1st place News

Controversial N86 Upgrade Continues To Divide Opinion As Next Phase Begins

After an allocation of €3.8 million announced by Brendan Griffin TD in January 2016, the long awaited upgrade of the 16.5km stretch of the N86 between Dingle and Annascaul has commenced in recent weeks. Motorists have observed the staked outlines of the proposed route while heavy machinery has begun groundworks between Baile na Saor Lower and Lispole. Mired in controversy from the start of the initial project, this new stretch is also causing ripples in the community with some opposed to the changes and others still seeking clarity on many issues surrounding the proposed route.

With a timeframe of 18 months to complete the project, Allman and McSweeney, the company awarded the contract to build the road, have started to excavate along the proposed route. While the intention is to improve road safety by removing the series of sharp hairpin bends renowned with the road, many objectors feel that the ‘character’ of the road is being denuded. One local who wishes to remain anonymous said “Isn’t this why they come here in the first place? Those hairpins are an attraction in themselves.’ When asked whether the changes will help improve safety the local replied that ‘the road as it is enforces safety. Those hairpins slow cars down. You can’t pass out.’”

However more seasoned road-users want to see the changes, citing faster commute times with safer stretches to overtake the ‘glut of tourists’ on this popular national route. One Dingle motorist cited the summer months as frustrating having to deal with erratic driving from tourists, impromptu picture stops and ‘dangerously slow driving.’

For pupils of Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne, the new proposals will be welcomed. Students say the improvements will greatly enhance their journey to school by shortening their trips both ways. ‘Any few minutes extra at home in the morning or gained for homework or community pursuits come evening is to be welcomed’ says Jason Mac a tSíthigh, Chairman of the Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne Students’ Council. School bus drivers were also enthusiastic about the upgrade, citing the straightening of the road as necessary to eliminate the potential danger posed by high sided coaches packed with students negotiating hairpin bends.

Others have different issues with this project. Landowners along the route have been served CPO’s by the NRA and County Council. While many have accepted the arrangements, some have not owing to a lack of clarification on the exact route and the likely outcome for their property. Kay Devane of ‘Kate’s Shop’ in Lispole claims she still has ‘no idea’ how the road will affect her premises and another adjacent property, stating ‘This is going on for 6 years and some locals still don’t know for certain how they will be effected.’”

With landowners still seeking a clarification meeting with NRA and Council representatives it appears that this project, like the N86 itself, is set for tailbacks of its own.

Judges Citation:

A news story, unlike any other journalistic endeavour, has a carefully crafted formula for success.

The job of the news reporter is to tell the reader what happened, who it happened to, how it happened and when it happened.

With the type of structure and detail that you would expect from a page one news story in a national newspaper, this report on how a controversial road upgrade had divided local opinion was a clear winner.

Deservedly taking first place in the news category is Kate Ní Dhubháin, Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne, An Daingean.