

I.F.F. News

Independent Fianna Fail - The Republican Party

General Election 2002

It's time to vote Blaney

Profile

Niall Blaney is 28 years of age and is from Rosanakill in Fanad. He was elected to Donegal County Council in June 1999.

He is a member of the North Western Health Board and represents Donegal on the General Council of County Councils.

Niall is a civil engineering technician by profession but is now concentrating full-time on politics.

He has a keen interest in sport, currently playing soccer with Kerrykeel FC and Gaelic Football with Fanad Gaels.

Niall comes from a small farming background and is committed to the promotion and development of life in rural areas.

The Blaney home in Rosanakill is steeped in political history. Ever since 1927 a Blaney voice has given Donegal a particular ethos in the Oireachtas. Niall is the third generation and fourth member of the Blaney family fighting to retain the Blaney seat.

A vote for Niall Blaney is a vote for an Independent Republican voice. He will represent all shades of life and political opinion and work hard for a better future for Donegal.

A message to the Youth of Donegal NE

Councillor Niall Blaney makes a special appeal to the younger generation in Donegal North East. The future of politics in Ireland lies in your hands. You will be the decision-makers and the legislators. As a young candidate in this General Election I would ask all young voters to come out and cast your votes and make your voice heard. Being one of your own generation I am very much aware of the issues facing the youth of Donegal North East.

I am appealing to you personally to give me your No. 1 vote and continue your preferences.

Vote

BLANEY

No. 1

1

I.F.F. delivering for

The unity of our country and people

- We recognise that Peace can only be achieved through continued political dialogue which is inclusive of all shades of opinion.
- We believe that there will not be Peace with Justice on this island until Britain makes a declaration of intent to withdraw from our country.
- The Irish Government has a solemn responsibility to promote the realisation of a United Ireland.
- Independent Fianna Fail, if given a mandate, will actively urge the Government to achieve this objective.

Job Creation

- The unemployment rate in our county is four times the national average.
- Priority must be given to infrastructure development especially in the areas of fibre-optics, roads, harbours, electricity and natural gas. This infrastructure is absolutely essential to attract major industry and assist in the establishment of small indigenous industry. Without a solid infrastructural base any future employment within this county will be in jeopardy.
- IFF calls for the promotion of business incubator units to promote home-grown business. This will enable local businesses to compete with larger firms and create local employment.
- Objective One Status is not being fully utilised for Donegal's benefit. IFF will call on the forthcoming Government, through the IDA to promote positive discrimination for Donegal.
- Jobs can also be created by the decentralisation of government services.

Health and Family

- Health continues to present many problems in this country. We still have a two-tier system of medical care. Medical card holders are not being treated on an equal basis with fee-paying patients.
- Our waiting lists are increasing to an unacceptable extent and regardless of how much funding is provided we are not solving the problem. We have had 30 years of the Regional Health Boards and their structures have proved to be top heavy and unwieldy. It is obvious that funding needs to be re-directed to front line services. We could save money by having more compact health Board units located within the catchment areas of General Hospitals.
- Independent Fianna Fail calls for the reform of the Health Board system in

order to re-instate the aim of the services - Quality Care for those who need it most.

- Independent Fianna Fail will fight for extensive video conference linkages between Letterkenny and other hospitals to eliminate the huge problems associated with patients having to travel long distances for Medical Consultant Services.
- We call for a complete overhaul of the Accident and Emergency Department in our hospitals. Patients recommended for X-Ray by their local GP should not have to wait for examination in the A&E Department. This would accelerate waiting times in this Department and leave more staff available to alleviate the pressure in Casualty.
- 55 people per day die of cancer in this country. Care for cancer sufferers must be made a priority. Early diagnosis is of vital importance. Independent Fianna Fail calls for free smear testing and breast cancer screening for women in the North West. A screening service for prostate cancer for all males is also essential.
- IFF calls for an upgrading of the psychiatric services and facilities. We will press for improved care and specialised centres with back-up treatment.
- IFF calls for a proper orthodontist service for children at the start of their primary education and assessment at regular intervals thereafter.
- The Health Boards should give more recognition to Dyslexia Associations. Funding should be made available for a proper Educational Psychologist service in our schools. Waiting lists for speech therapy for children should be eliminated.
- Criteria for Medical Cards eligibility must be relaxed and medical cards should be available to all third level students.
- Local facilities such as ambulances and community care facilities are essential for rural Donegal. IFF calls for the implementation of an Ambulance Service in towns such as Buncrana and Falcarragh.
- Due to outgoing Deputy Harry Blaney's efforts an epidural service now exists in Letterkenny General Hospital but a full compliment of staff is necessary to make this a full-time service.
- IFF calls for improved resourcing of a home-help service which is not means-tested and the means-test for Carers Allowance should also be abolished.
- The parent who chooses to stay at home to take care of family is presently being discriminated against. There must be financial recognition for their services to



I.F.F. supporters at the launch of Cllr. Blaney's campaign in the Milford Inn Hotel.

society.

A new health scheme similar to the Medical Card should be introduced for all children up to the age of 4 to 5 years.

Infrastructure

Roads

Donegal should have the third largest priority for funding in this country by virtue of its 6,508kms of Regional and County Roads. Since 1997 significant improvements have been made, chiefly due to Deputy Harry Blaney's agreement with the Government, but still not to our complete satisfaction. IFF demands that funding be allocated to each county based on the amount of its roads network.

For the first three years of the 28th Dail significant improvements did take place in our national primary road network. However, since the introduction of the National Development Plan this county has lost vital funding. The development of the N2 and A5 from Dublin to Derry to motorway status is not included in this plan. This spells disaster for Donegal. IFF has battled since November 2000 for motorway status for this vital artery and will continue to demand that it is included in the N.D.P. review.

IFF calls for the new road re-alignment on the N14 from Manor Roundabout to Lifford and also for the reintroduction of road-strengthening monies for the N13 from Bridgend to Letterkenny.

We also call for immediate funding for completion of the Mountain Top realignment and continuation to the Termon/Dunlewey junction. IFF will also demand funding for road-strengthening on the N56.

We will also press for a new ring-road leading from the Dry Arch roundabout to connect with the N56 at Carnamuggagh.

IFF will fight for completion of the Mulroy Bridge Project and the implementation of the car-ferry services from Magilligan to Greencastle and Buncrana to Rathmullan. This will see the completion of what we originally termed the "Peninsula-Hopping Project".

The development of our county and regional roads in and around Letterkenny Town is 10 years behind time. We call for an immediate injection of funding and a realistic ring-road plan.

IFF also calls for the continuation of Gaeltacht Road monies as introduced by Minister Eamonn Ó Cuiv in 2000 to help bolster our declining Gaeltacht areas.

Broadband Network

IFF calls for the implementation and expansion of the proposed fibre-optic

broadband network into and throughout our county.

We also ask that the proposed gas pipeline from Culkeeragh in Derry to Letterkenny be expanded throughout the county.

IFF also calls for an adequate supply of electricity to all rural areas of Donegal which will cater for indigenous job creation in industry.

Water and Sewerage

A massive investment is needed to address the disgraceful situation now developing in relation to the provision of a public water supply and sewerage disposal especially to the North West and East of this county. In our small towns and villages sewerage systems are inadequate and in many cases, non-existent. Raw sewage flowing into our rivers is becoming a major environmental pollutant.

Piers, Harbours and Airports

We suffer from a lack of pier and harbour facilities and we call again for the development of a deep sea port facility at Rathmullan and the continued upgrading/extension to the fishing ports at Greencastle and Killybegs.

The airport at Carrickfin could service the county better if the road infrastructure leading to it was seriously upgraded.

Environment

Our environment must be respected and preserved for future generations. IFF calls for serious consideration to be given to a realistic waste-management plan which is cost effective and explores all methods of waste disposal.

Education

Today we have new demands on teachers and parents and we have not confronted the reality of how these new challenges should be met.

Learning Support and Resource Services have become more available but facilities must be updated so that children can be educated in an appropriate environment. Only then can the service work to its full potential.

IFF demands that the Department of Education provides an adequate Educational Psychologist Service to eliminate current waiting lists.

Substandard schools should be immediately upgraded. Many Donegal schools are seriously underfunded with Voluntary Contributions supplementing Department funding.

Proper sporting facilities must be put in place in each school so that children can develop a healthy and sporting lifestyle.



Deputy Harry Blaney and Cllr. Niall Blaney pictured at the site of the new Mulroy bridge crossing.

all of Donegal

- The ongoing education of the workforce should be promoted through training programmes both within the work atmosphere and through third-level education. This would greatly enhance employment prospects.

- Letterkenny Institute of Technology has made available some degree courses in recent years but we again call for its upgrading to University Status.

- Third level student grants should be increased by a minimum of 40% with the income limit for grant eligibility increased by 25%.

Housing

- Housing is a fundamental right of every citizen. The elimination of the current housing waiting list is one of IFF's main priorities.

- The purchase/building of Council housing estates should not be limited to just our larger towns but also to small towns and villages, thereby halting the decline of our rural areas.

- More emphasis must be placed on the provision of play-areas and amenities for children in housing estates.

- At present the maximum for eligibility for builders/buyers grant is 1346 sq. ft. This should be increased to a minimum of 2,000 sq. ft.

- IFF also proposes VAT exemption on all construction materials for those building their first home.

Agriculture

Agriculture is still our most vital industry.

- IFF will make the preservation of the small family farm a top priority given that small farmers make up 80% of our farming community. The small family farm must be sustained in order to stem rural decline.

- Farmyard anti-pollution grants should be increased from 40% to 60%. There should also be grants for smaller and medium-sized farmers who don't fit into the present scheme.

- The new Farm Building Schemes discriminate against the smaller farmer where one must have at least 30 Income Units to qualify (20 i.u.'s must be from farming).

- This excludes many small farmers who would have qualified for Farm Building Grants in the past. This issue must be re-examined.

- Meat factory prices should be more in line with prices paid in other E.U. countries. The present control of meat factory prices by large monopolies must be addressed.

- Live export trade of sheep and cattle must be sustained and new markets found to continue the free-flow of cattle, sheep and lamb through our marts.

- Area Aid payments for Hill Areas should be restored to the original €113.84 per Hectare.

- While sheep tagging has to be accepted due to last year's Foot and Mouth outbreak the present system of registration creates too many problems and will eventually drive farmers out of sheep. A more sensible approach to this system must be found.

- The collection of fallen sheep must be subsidised in the same way as cattle; the €38 collection fee is much too expensive.

- Regulations re. the Registration of Dealers must be relaxed so they can carry on their livelihood and marts can continue to function.

- Controls on slurry-spreading should be re-examined.

Fishing

- Ireland has 16% of E.U. waters but only 4.5% of the Fisheries Quotas. This surely is unfair discrimination. I.F.F. will press the Government to re-negotiate our quotas.

- Only 1% of all National Exports are sourced from fishing. This is a disgraceful statistic considering the amount of waters we have (14 times more sea than land). We call on the relevant Government Agency to adopt a more dedicated, dynamic approach in the marketing of Irish Seafood Products.

- The exorbitant licensing fee, as now proposed for inshore fishermen, should not be introduced.

- The livelihood of those employed in fish-farming and shell-fishing must be protected. Our young people have to be given the opportunity to earn a living at home, rear a family and play a full role in our community. The



Deputy Harry and Cllr. Niall Blaney pictured outside the oncology unit at Letterkenny General Hospital. Deputy Blaney's contributions were instrumental in the provision of this unit.

knock-on benefits of this employment go far beyond those working at base ie. suppliers, services, transport, marketing, etc. Those involved in fish-farming however must take all precautionary measures to safeguard the health of their product and the environment. They cannot afford to pollute the waters they use.

Tourism

- Our natural beauty must be matched with an intent to develop an industry which offers our greatest potential in job creation for our youth.

- Cross Border marketing strategies, quality facilities and decent access routes must be provided.

- Our North West coastline from Donegal to Antrim has potential over and above what exists in West and Southern Ireland. Presently, however, it is not being properly marketed by the relevant Tourist Bodies.

- IFF will fight for more dynamic marketing of our county with a cross-border approach.

- Through the efforts of outgoing Deputy Blaney four slipways are now in place for car ferries at Magilligan/Greencastle and Rathmullan/Buncrana. Funding has also been provided for an Environmental Impact Statement on Mulroy Bridge to bring it to construction stage. When completed these 'peninsula hopping' projects have the potential to bring a whole new dimension to tourism in Donegal.

- The Inishowen 100, The Knockalla Coast Road and The Atlantic Drive are amongst the most scenic areas in the world but their potential can only be realised through adequate funding and grants being made available for tourist accommodation, heritage centres and other tourist attractions.

Youth Affairs

- Ireland has the youngest population in Europe, one quarter being under 25 years of age. These young people offer us real hope for the future of Ireland and Independent Fianna Fáil recognises their importance and urges full recognition of their status in society.

- Third level student grants should be increased by a minimum of 40%.

- Income limit for grant eligibility should be increased by 25%.

- IFF calls for significant reduction in car insurance for young people in line with the European average.

- IFF proposes VAT exemption on all

construction materials for young building a house for the first time.

- Increased funding should be available for Youth Centres/Recreation Facilities which, as well as providing outlets, would also provide a source of information on jobs, careers, and counselling etc.

- We encourage you, our young people, to become actively involved in politics. The future of our democracy is in your hands.

The Environment

- Our environment must be protected and preserved for future generations.

- The control of litter, pollution and the protection of our natural resources must be a major priority.

- Serious consideration must be given to a realistic waste management strategy which is cost effective and environmentally sound methods of waste disposal.

Justice

- In recent years a crime and justice culture has developed in this country.

- Deprivation in many sectors of our society is a major factor in the growth of drug and criminal activity. The lack of opportunities for recreation, for education and for counselling services in our communities and housing estates is a major factor in young people turning to drugs and crime.

- The country needs a new science with the objective of not only eradicating drugs but also the causes which have become a scourge in our society.

- There must be a new focus on drug and alcohol abuse. An increased Garda presence in our towns, villages and rural areas is also of vital importance.

Gaeilge agus An Ghaeltacht

- Seasann Fianna Fáil Neamhbhíocht neartú agus caomhnú na Gaeltachta.

- Ba cheart Deontas Labhairt a leathnú go teaghlaigh taobh na Gaeltachta a thógann a bpáistí. Tá gá le airgeadú níos fearr do Gaeltachta.

- Tá géarghá le tionscail bheatha sna Gaeltachtaí scaite, imeallach agus táthar chun na daoine a choimeád sa ceantracha seo léis an teangeolaíocht a chaomhnú.



Cllr. Niall Blaney and Cllr. Dessie Larkin at the site of the new Letterkenny Sports Complex.

Blaney delivers €253m for Donegal

In June 1997 I.F.F. negotiated a deal with an Taoiseach Bertie Ahern whereby Deputy Harry Blaney would support the Government for a 5 year term. Arising directly from this agreement Deputy Blaney is responsible for delivering total funding of €170.66m for Donegal.

Through his representations over and above his 1997 Agreement Deputy Blaney has also delivered €82.44m funding. This excludes Regional and County Road Funding of €99.097m for which he was partly responsible.

His achievements are as follows -
Achievements through Agreement

Objective 1

Objective 1 status for the Border Counties and West of the Shannon was agreed with an Taoiseach before it became an issue with the other political parties in Donegal.

National Primary Roads

- Clar-Barnesmore Realignment Project - €12.06m
- Lifford Manor Roundabout - €1.28m

National Secondary Roads

- Mouncharles Bypass - €6.41m
- Mouncharles/Killybegs strengthening - €0.36m
- Letterkenny Mountain Top/ Termon - €2.96m
- Strengthening and Improvements N56 - €6.30m

Regional County Roads

Allocations Increased from €9.82m in 1997 to €25.39m in 2002. This represents an increase of 258%.

Business Park

Letterkenny Business Park provided and currently providing employment.

Water and Sewerage

- Fanad Water Supply Scheme (Stage 1) - €1.3m
- Fanad Water Supply Scheme (Stage 2) - €6.8m
- Lough Mourne/Letterkenny Water Supply Scheme - €38m

Housing

I.F.F. looked for 1,250 houses over the 5 years. 1,300 housing starts have been allocated 2000 to 2003.

I.F.F. is confident that this allocation will be added to and that the current waiting list will be eliminated over the next couple of years. From 1998 to 2000 €68.57m has been allocated to Donegal County Council for housing starts.

Tourism

Deputy Blaney promoted what is known as "The Peninsula Hopping Project" which consists of two car-ferries and a

bridge-crossing as listed below:

- Magilligan - Greencastle Slipways - €5.71m
- Buncrana - Rathmullan Slipways - €5.71m
- Mulroy Bridge (to progress to construction stage) - €1.65m

Magilligan/Greencastle Car-Ferry is due to commence in 2002.

Buncrana/Rathmullan Car-Ferry is due to commence in 2003.

Health

Arising from I.F.F.'s agreement with the Government the following extra services have been provided in Letterkenny General Hospital -

- Epidural Services
- Three full time Registrars in A&E Department
- Orthodontist Specialist appointed. Consultant Orthodontist visits Letterkenny Hospital on a weekly basis.

Education

Due to Deputy Blaney's agreement:

- All schools now have access to Remedial Services
- Classroom assistants have been provided for children with disability.
- A new Vocational School (Mulroy College) provided in Milford - €3.66m
- Extension to Woodlands NS, Letterkenny - €1.9m
- Extension to Cloontagh NS, Clonmany - €0.63m
- Ramelton No. 2 NS - €0.01m
- Cashel NS Fanad - €0.57m

Environment

Arising from I.F.F.'s agreement with the Government

- Buncrana and Ballyshannon have obtained Urban Renewal Schemes
- Ramelton and Ardara have obtained Town Renewal Schemes
- Environmental Works Schemes have been provided in Ramelton €0.5m and Ardara - €0.28m

Coastal Protection Works for:-

- Ray-Rathmullan - €0.225m
- Kerrykeel-Rosnaskill - €0.254m
- Mouncharles - €0.127m
- Bunagee Culdaff Stormwalls - €0.032m



A computer generated impression of the new bridge on Mulroy Bay between Leatbeg in Fanad and Mulroy, Carrigart.

More funding is expected in 2002.

Marine

Fishing Quotas were re-negotiated. The following funding was provided for harbour/pier developments:

- Killybegs Harbour - €5.89m
- Greencastle Harbour - €1.52m
- Burtonport Pier - €1.59m
- Ballywhoriskey Pier - €1.65m
- Downings Pier (Seawall) - €0.03m

Abortion Referendum

One of Deputy Blaney's conditions for support of the Government was the granting of an abortion referendum. This took place in March 2002.

Other achievements outside of the 1997 Agreement

Health

As a result of I.F.F.'s representations Symptomatic Breast Disease Services will now be provided in Letterkenny General Hospital.

Oncology Services will soon be in place in Letterkenny General Hospital.

Modern Ultra-Sound equipment has been provided in Letterkenny for patients suffering from stroke-disease. This eliminates long travel to Dublin for this service.

Two Orthopaedic Surgeons are now in place in Letterkenny Hospital.

Ambulance facilities for Buncrana and Falcarragh have progressed to planning stage.

A generator was provided to provide power to Camdonagh Community Hospital.

Housing

Criteria for essential repair grants has been relaxed with the result that the grant is now more accessible to those in need of housing repairs.

Water and Sewerage Schemes

- Letterkenny Sewerage with extension to Bonagee - €22m
- Letterkenny Water Supply - €2.75m
- Gweedore Sewerage - €21m
- Camdonagh Sewerage - €10.24m
- Ardara Sewerage - €3.66m
- Lagan Water Supply - €3.05m
- Rathmullan Sewerage - €3m
- Falcarragh Sewerage - €3m
- Glencar Sewer Network Upgrade - €0.0635m
- Oldtown Sewer (Extension 1 and 2) - €0.419m
- Letterkenny Sewerage (Sallaghgrane Extension) - €0.445m
- Desertegney Water Supply Scheme - €0.4m

L.I.S. Schemes

Funding for L.I.S. Schemes increased from £275,000 (€350,000) in 1997 to £1.3m (€1,650,000) in 2002. This represents a 470% increase for non-county roads. Donegal's allocation for 2002 was the highest in the country. The overall allocation for L.I.S. schemes since 1998 is €5.625m

Marine

- Kerrykeel Slipway - €0.27m
- Woodquarter Slipway - €0.25m
- Bunagee (Culdaff) Pier - €0.22m
- Portalean Pier - €0.076m
- Buncrana Quay Decking - €0.76m
- Carrickarory - €0.44m
- Portsalon Pier - €0.078m
- Buncrana R.N.L.I. Berthing - €0.106m

Bóithre Gaeltachta

Following the Údaras Elections of 1999 Deputy Harry Blaney requested the Government to appoint a representative for the smaller, marginal Gaeltacht areas of Donegal. During discussions with Aire Síle De Valera and Aire Stáit Éamonn Ó Cuív it became evident that such an appointment would not be forthcoming but a guarantee

was given by both Ministers that substantial funding would be provided for Strategic Roads in the Marginal Donegal Gaeltachts up until 2007.

Fundings obtained to date are as follows:

- Rinmore Pt. via Eelbum Bridge - £24,300
- Downings/Rosapenna/Carrigart - £190,000
- Fintown to Letterkenny - £143,000
- Dungloe-Doochary-Fintown - £50,000
- Carrick Bridge (Design) - £50,000
- Glencolumbcille-Carrick - £605,000
- Total - £1,252,700 in year 2000**
- Fanad Head via Eelbum - £345,000
- Downings Pier/Atlantic Drive - £15,000
- Fintown - Letterkenny - £100,000
- Dungloe/Doochary/Fintown - £170,000
- Carrick Bridge - £80,000
- Glencolumbcille/Carrick - £610,000
- Ballybofoey/Fintown - £260,000
- Glenties/Fintown - £120,000
- Muckish/Falcarragh - £100,000
- Total - £1,800,000 in year 2001**

Agriculture

Re-introduction of Control of Farm Pollution and Improvement to Dairy Hygiene Grants

Increases in headage to hill-sheep farmers

As a result of 1998 negotiations between Minister Joe Walsh and the four Independent Deputies the ceiling was raised on headage payments. Any single participant may receive from £3,024 to £4,000. The disallowance of headage payments to farmers over 66 years in receipt of Contributory Pensions was also removed.

Fire Services

- Provision of Fire Station for Buncrana
- Fire-station for Milford
- Three new Fire-Appliances for Donegal
- New Road-Traffic Accident equipment for Milford and Camdonagh.

Regional and County Road Allocations

Since 1998 €99.097m has been provided for road realignment and strengthening of our regional and county roads across Donegal.

From the above statistics you can see that Blaney has delivered for all of Donegal. An independent voice has made a difference without renegeing on our principles. If elected we will continue to fight for a fair share of funding for Donegal from all Departments.

Issued by John Dorrian Cashel Kindrum: agent for the candidates.

Printed by TribunePrint Milford Tel. 074-53600



The I.F.F. leader Deputy Harry Blaney pictured with his son Niall at the slipway in Greencastle which was delivered as part of the I.F.F. agreement with the Government.