

Never Say Die Attitude brings water to Peterswell Homes

By Colm Burke



Top: Tom McGarry, Paul Sherry RIP, Fr. P. Callanan, Colm Burke, Liam Caulfield, Martina Brady, Eugene Glynn, Patrick Fitzgerald.
Bottom: Josie Lynskey, Eugene Glynn, Martina Brady, Liam Caulfield, Colm Burke, Patrick Fitzgerald, Tom McGarry, Paul Sherry RIP



The official turning-on of the water in the new Peterswell Group Water Scheme at Lissadoyle, Peterswell, on Friday, 18th May 2001 marked the beginning of the essential service of 130 homes over a wide area, close to Slieve Aughty.

The event was also a symbolic one because the simple turning on ceremony at the reservoir and pump-house in the remote highlands had a message for communities similarly disadvantaged for too long – get together, do it yourselves and don't wait for others to do it for you.

It was a joyous event as the people celebrated the beginning of a new era. Over the years the Peterswell area had the particularly unpleasant experience of inadequate and imperfect water supply. The pump in the village displayed local authority notices regarding the use of the water. There were stories going around that the intensity of the septic tanks attached to newly built homes had caused pollution in the water table. The problem acquiring new water for homes for pure local wells appeared to be without solution.

Putting their heads together the people in the area came up with the fact that there was a supply of pure, clean water at a couple of springs in Lissadoyle, but the question as to its delivery around the parish was daunting. There would be need for 16 miles of water pipes. There would be the huge expense of digging up the road for the water pipes. The cost to the 130 householders and for the 300 connections to farms would be astronomical.

Looking back on their combined efforts, the local people had a justified feeling of achievement. No one was looking for praise. No one would ever be denied their equal legal shareholding in the Peterswell Group Water Scheme Company.

1990, the date of the first move in Peterswell to do something about the water supply, seemed a long way off from the May 2001 opening ceremony. The committees elected went about their work with a will but the difficulties were incessant. However chunks of light began to appear in 1999. A new committee of eight people were elected to perform a rather onerous task. They were Colm Burke (Chairman), Tom McGarry (Secretary), Josie Lynskey (Treasurer), Martina Brady, Paul Sherry, Eugene Glynn, Patrick Fitzgerald and Liam Caulfield. The support of Eugene Glynn with his skills of divining water springs, led to the lands of Sean and Mary Mulkerrins at Lissadoyle with a successful outcome. After a lot of negotiation, lobbying and pleading with politicians, counsellors, ministers, and the support of National Federation of Group Water Schemes (notably Bernard Keely) Galway County Council finally granted permission to go ahead and helped fund the project.

Peterswell Group Water Scheme is now in operation since May 2001. With over 120 houses connected 170 land connections to farmers, a 60,000 gallon reservoir, 16 miles of piping at a cost of over 1 million euro, in which 140,000 collected locally from members. The remainder was funded by Galway County Council in the form of grants.

Abuses of, or a waste of water by a small number of members is very irresponsible on their behalf. The committee has to monitor these members on a regular basis to try to

curtail the wastage of water. It is now proved to be the biggest problem facing PGWS committee.

Quality of water is excellent as revealed in all our tests carried out to date. It is now up to every person in the community to ensure this continues and to prevent pollution. The water is tested on a regular basis by Galway County Council health inspectors.

The AGM is held annually in the month of May. At this meeting, the committee is elected from the members of the scheme. Their role is to set the:

1. Rent for the year
2. New connections and any other decisions that one has to make during the year.

The rent for 2004 is set at

1. 50 Euro per house connection
2. 100 Euro per land connection.

And should be paid to any committee members.

The committee elected in 1999 remain in situ today March 2004. They have been re-elected annually at the AGM unopposed.

They are Colm Burke (Chairman), Tom McGarry (Secretary), Josie Lynskey (Treasurer), Martina Brady, Paul Sherry, Eugene Glynn, Patrick Fitzgerald and Liam Caulfield.

PGWS IS YOUR SCHEME. IT IS YOUR OBLIGATION TO MONITOR AND REPORT ANY ABUSES OF THE SCHEME.

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