

## Askamore – past and future.

Askamore Community Centre, at the heart of the local community, opened its doors to the public in April 1980. The hall and squash court provided sporting, social, agricultural, political and religious facilities at various times over the next 30 odd years. A second squash court was added in 1986/87, to further enhance the facilities available.

The centre plays host to squash club, badminton club, community games group, card drives, tops of the parish, community alert group, Macra na Feirme, Foróige and numerous other incidental meetings and gatherings. Ensuring that the centre remains as the focal point of the community is the active, hard-working and visionary Askamore Community Development group.

Among its noted achievements to date are the Childcare Centre, the new looped walk in association with Fáilte Ireland, development of St. Bridget's well and the Grotto, and a number of other worthwhile projects. All of these many works have been possible only with the wonderful financial and practical support of the local people of Askamore.

Askamore Community Development group have now made a further decision which, it hopes, will once again, improve the standard of facility being provided locally. With the second squash court sitting unused, it was decided to extend the building to allow new meeting rooms, activity room (in squash court) and office space to be built. This will give scope within the community for further recreational, social and even commercial usage. The plans may be seen in the Hall and in the Church porch over the next few weeks.

Of course, the nub of this decision is money. A grant application has already been made and has been successful up to the value of €73,000. This leaves a balance outstanding of almost €50,000, for which we once again turn to the community of Askamore.

The Community Development group has already turned down two offers of grant money for local developments which weren't suitable for local needs. It is felt that if this third grant is turned down, there will not be another offer.

Also, as the squash court is seriously deteriorating structurally, it would cost upwards of €140,000 to repair in another couple of years, and if this grant were turned down all of the money would have to be raised locally.

In light of this, the Development group has set up a new committee, consisting of representatives from each group within the Development area, whose task is to raise the necessary funds over the next two years.

What this extensive committee proposes to do in order to raise the funds is to have one major fundraising venture. If we can get 200 people locally to guarantee payment, through a direct debit, of **€10 monthly for the next two years**, this will raise the necessary funds.

The Community Development group recognises that this is a very difficult time in which to fundraise, and understands that there is no good time to come back to the same group of people again and again. But, knowing how the community of Askamore has responded in the past to local ventures, we are putting our faith in a similar response to help develop our community centre. We hope that the direct debit system will allow people to make a commitment that won't be too much money all in one go.

The building and refurbishment is due to start by October 2010, and should be ready for use in early 2011.

For those who sign up to our direct debit payment before the end of June 2010, their names will be entered in a **draw for a weekend away** in Ireland.

As a further incentive for all those who pay the €240, there will be a **draw for a holiday to the value of €1000** (or cash in lieu) as soon as all the payments have been made.

Once you make your commitment, your name will be placed on a brick on our website, and will be transferred to a plaque to be placed in the newly refurbished building once it is completed.

A member of our committee will contact you in the next few weeks. Please consider very carefully what your commitment will mean to the Centre and the community of Askamore. We sincerely hope you will agree to make that commitment.