

CALLAN NOTES

HISTORY IN THE MAKING;

The history and tradition of learning goes back a long way in Callan and when both the Mercy nuns and Christian Brothers came to the town in 1872 and 1884 respectfully.

During those 140 plus years both schools have excelled in education and produced some of the finest people who have gone on to excel in many facets of life and who always refer back to the wonderful days they experienced in both Saint Brigids college and the CBS and later Colaiste Eamann Ris.

But times are a changing and other areas are so much more accessible competition is even greater, so both colleges have begun the process of amalgamation by September 2022.

Amalgamation is not a new phenomenon in many parts of Ireland. In 2007 both primary schools in Callan amalgamated and worked from both campuses at West Street and Kilkenny Road for many years until the wonderful new Bunscoil McAuley Rice was built some years ago.

Since then numbers have grown and today it is at full capacity with additional rooms already been planned for construction in the near future. That is surely what the new second level college will encounter when amalgamation settles in.

At the official launce to announce the newly formed coordination committee on Tuesday 24th September the common theme was the desired wish of the late Brother Damien Brennan that both colleges would come together to create a wonderful new campus of learning in Callan. Canice Hickey who is acting principal of Colaiste Ris Callan spoke passionately about Br Damien and he would have been so proud to have been present at this historic night. Mary O'Keeffe Principal of St Brigids said it was a very special evening for both schools and will be working hard to bring both together over the next three years.

She said that the new college will continue the strong Catholic values that are very much present in the present schools and will look forward to bringing even greater opportunities of learning to all.

Br Christy O'Carroll spoke on behalf of the Christian Brothers community and sincerely wished everyone the best in making the new campus happen. Catherine McCormack of the Ceist Board spoke of the advantages of mixed sex schools.

She said they allow for a wider range of subjects which is a huge advantage over individual male and female schools. She said amalgamation will be challenging but overall it will



The male and female Callan Macra soccer teams.

benefit both students and parents.

Ann O'Brien from the Edmund Rice Schools trust said she was involved in the primary schools amalgamation in 2007 and never will forget the joint passion of Brother Damien and Sister Louise Phelan in making that happen.

She said it is very hard for two small schools to survive now a days so amalgamation is the most desired solution. A new project steering committee has been formed made up of board members, teachers, parents and co-opted people make up the twelve strong group.

Frank Smith will chair the committee, he has a lot of experience in education and is former principal of Portarlinton community school which he said has grown from 600 pupils to 1100 today such is its popularity.

He said its a prime example of what amalgamation will do in a small town. Frank quoted Br Pat Madigan of the Christian Brothers who was known as a great visionary in education, "You have two fantastic schools in Callan, but the next one will be even better, but its up to you all to bring the qualities of the two other schools into one".

He said that Brother Damien was still even more enthusiastic right up to his death about the amalgamation, so let us do justice to Br Damien and Create a school that everyone will want to come to from all areas. Yes this will be wonderful for Callan and surrounding areas and we all know if the will of Brother Damien is there looking over all, it will certainly happen.

JOHN LOCKES NEWS