

## Gort na n-Og Childcare Set to Open in Holycross

By Noel Dundon



The fantastic new childcare facility for Holycross village will open its doors to the public in a few weeks time with the capacity to cater for some 70 children on a daily basis, from early morning till late in the evening.

The state-of-the-art facility, located at St Michael's National School which cost just under 1 million Euro to construct, will further enhance the parishes ability to cater for the educational and childcare needs of families in the area and will provide a real focal point and hub of activity for children from as young as newborns right up to those leaving primary school.

Funded by Pobal and supported by Tipperary Childcare Committee, Gort na n-Og is the brainchild of retired Principal Mr Timmy Delaney who saw a need for such a facility in the parish. "This was a response to a very clearly established childcare need in the community. I was in touch with a lot of young parents who were both working in order to meet overheads associated with present day living. They were always saying that not alone was childcare very expensive, but it was also very difficult to access. We did a survey of the area and found that, yes, there was a need and we took it from there," Timmy Delaney explained to The Tipperary Star.

With the school authorities on board and with the support of Board of Management Chairperson, Rev Fr Tom Breen and St Michael's NS staff members, a submission for funding was made based on the findings of the survey which was carried out by the Tipperary Institute under the watchful eye

of Mr Ciaran Lynch. The project hit a number of 'roadblocks' but finally came to fruition after much persistence and patience on the part of the driving team behind it.

"It's a real joy to see the building in place now and it's just fantastic to think that we will be able to cater for 70 children of all ages in Gort na n-Og. I suppose it's a dream come through really and we will be keeping in mind at all times, our two key issues - affordability and high quality childcare," Timmy said.

Brid Bergin Maher, who has been running Ladybird Montessori in St Michael's for sixteen years will manage the new facility and her school will be incorporated into Gort na n-Og. She is thrilled to be heading up the project and will have a Senior Childcare Worker, a Childcare Worker and a number of other personnel under the Community Employment Scheme in place for the opening. "We now have a fabulous new building with an amazing colour scheme and the fact that it is purpose built for children is fantastic. It is a child orientated, friendly and welcoming environment and we are really looking forward to having children coming in the doors to us," Brid said.

The building is designed around an interactive garden which has been the one unchanging element of the project since its inception.

Gort na n-Og will offer childcare and early childhood education to babies and pre-school children, and an after school service to children of school going age. The service will open from 8:00am -6:00pm Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year and qualifies for the free pre-school year. Families may be eligible for reduced fees depending on circumstances and the ability to meet criteria. Places can be booked for the wonderful success story that is Gort na n-Og at 087 3675012 or e-mail [gortnanog@gmail.com](mailto:gortnanog@gmail.com)

While the building is of ultra modern design and fit-out, it does not in any way interfere with the aesthetics of the historic village and actually enhances the locality. It is nestled snugly behind the National School, adjacent to the Community Centre and flanked by the Sue Ryder homes. Gort na n-Og is right at the heart of the community in Holycross - exactly where it was envisioned for.