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PRESS RELEASE

Ballinaclesh, Co Wicklow; March 11th 2010 – SF Cllr Snell's comments, as reported in Wicklow Times (March 8th 2010) are inaccurate, disingenuous and a personal attack on me. Reflective of a desperate ploy to deflect from the real issue - his party's fairy tale economic policies.

Specifically:

- He alleges I am living in the past over my comments concerning SF/IRA; however less than 7 months ago (August 5th 2009) his party colleague, Martin Ferris TD, proudly collected the convicted killers of Detective Garda Jerry McCabe from Castlerea Prison. SF can't have it both ways in a democracy; the party says it wants a place in democratic politics, whilst at the same time its prominent representatives continue to inflict further hurt and pain by their public solidarity with convicted killers. Clearly Gerry Adam's comment "They haven't gone away you know" still holds true today.
- Regarding the town council elections in 1999, Mr Snell ignores the fact that Ireland uses a proportional representation electoral system; my role in that election was to ensure my colleagues were elected to the council, a task I succeeded in when my votes on Count 7 were distributed. Party politics is about maximising the number of seats for your party. However I do fully understand Snell's ignorance of the PR system, as SF have always failed to attract transfers. Plus SF in Wicklow has still yet to run more than one candidate on a ticket, let alone get more than one elected.
- He is incorrect to say I was co-opted onto the Wicklow Harbour Commissioners in 1999; I was in fact appointed by the then Minister for the Marine.
- His final, and most serious, allegation that I try to hide my political allegiance defies logic, being a regular contributor to both local and national radio, newspapers and television, I have always identified myself as a member of FF, as do my web, Twitter and Facebook sites! Perhaps Mr Snell feels embarrassed over SF's past and assumes others feel the same; however I have no such concerns and am proud to declare my membership of FF.

The key issue for this Country is the economy, as this affects everyone living in Co Wicklow. Over the last twenty months, the FF lead Government has taken decisive and bold action to bring this country back from the brink of economic and financial ruin. The latest of these measures were contained in last December's budget.

Critically these measures have successfully stabilised our public finances and greatly increased international investor confidence in our ability to work our way out of this most difficult of economic crises. The benefits are there for all to see, when you compare the cost of our borrowing to that of Greece's:



The cost of repaying our national debt has fallen solely because the Government has made the difficult but correct choices.

If Ireland had gone the way of Greece, we would have expected to pay €3.6 billion more in interest over the next 10 years on the money we have had to borrow this year: dead money that we can now divert to much needed public services, supporting those who have lost their jobs and investing in much needed infrastructure, such as the Wicklow Port Access Road.

Internationally, Ireland is now held up as an example of a country that is facing up to its economic difficulties and taking the necessary action. Now that the Government have begun to successfully stabilise our public finances, it can take the necessary measures to return to economic growth and to create and protect jobs.

Despite what Mr Snell incorrectly alleges, the citizens of Co Wicklow have shown they are willing to make sacrifices in the short term for the long term good of all. This maturity and understanding of the economic difficulties we face is the envy of other countries in Europe. Our flexibility and our foresight will be of enormous value to us as we continue to enact our plan for economic recovery.

It is indeed ironic that Mr Snell chooses to use a phrase from Aesop's Fables, as such I challenge him to debate with me, live on radio, his party's fairy tale economic policies.

ENDS