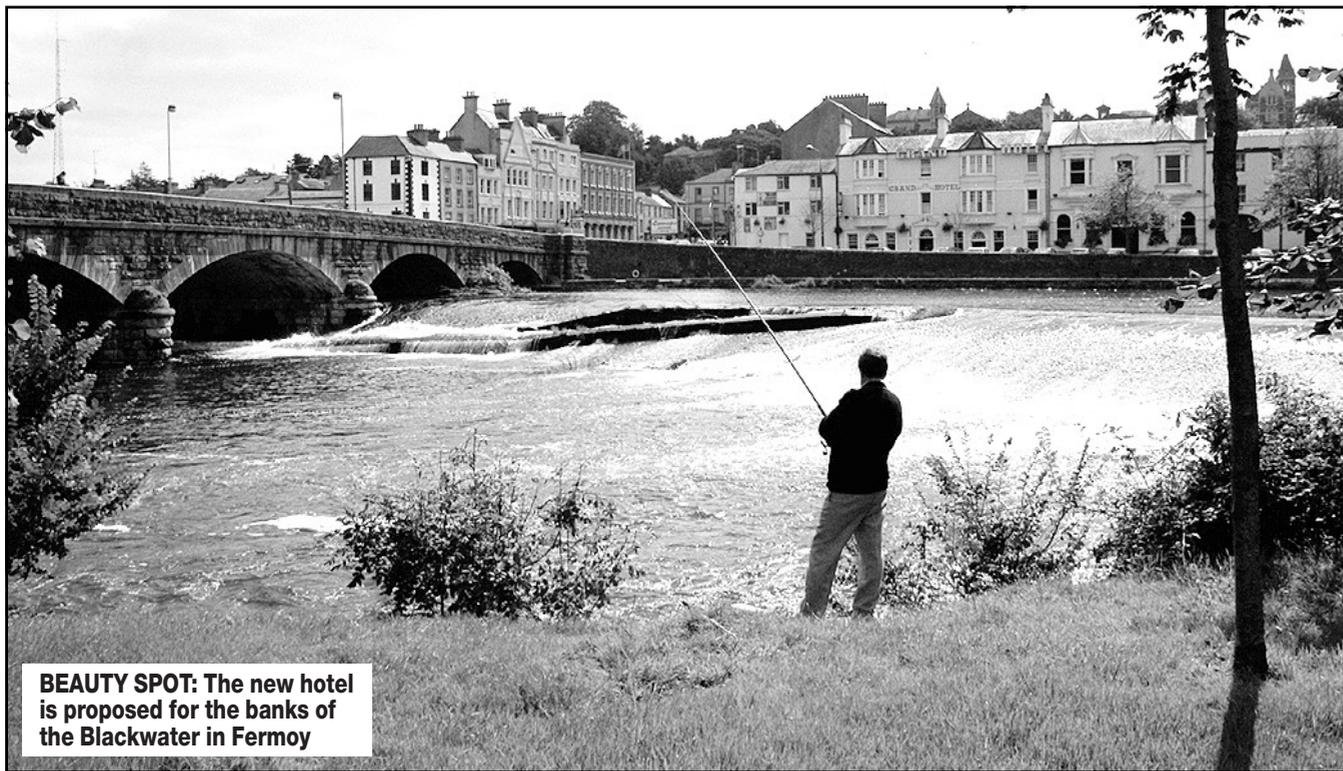


## Blackwater proposal has divided town



**BEAUTY SPOT:** The new hotel is proposed for the banks of the Blackwater in Fermoy

# D-day for hotel plan in Fermoy

“OH YES, it should.” “Oh no, it shouldn’t.”

Such polarised opinions are set to re-emerge in Fermoy today when An Bord Pleanála present their ruling on a controversial hotel and housing development.

Last summer, a heated debate broke out in Fermoy Town Council quarters over the proposed 100-bed hotel and 73-unit housing development by Lawton Homes on a greenfield site on the banks of the famous River Blackwater.

The June meeting saw the council narrowly defeat proposals to rezone the land for the development, which, by and large, has split the town into two camps.

The council tally — against the proposed rezoning of the land — was five to four.

Given that an approval would have resulted in a green light for the development, Lawton Homes have appealed to An Bord Pleanála to reverse this decision.

Those against the



By **OLGA CRONIN**

development feel it will destroy one of the only green areas left in the town, while those in favour feel it will boost the local economy and help it compete with other Cork satellite towns such as Midleton and Mallow.

One of the five town councillors against the proposed development is the current Mayor of Fermoy and Fine Gael county councillor Aileen Pyne.

“The Blackwater River is the greatest amenity in Fermoy,” said Ms Pyne, who, as a town councillor last summer, voted against the rezoning of the land.

“I don’t think it is right to build on the banks of the river, which is zoned as an amenity and green area.

“And I feel this is the

feeling of the constituents I represent.

“These are the issues which they have brought to me,” she said.

Ms Pyne said she is ‘very pro-development’ but that other sites in the town would be much more suitable, such as the current Cork Marts site, given that the Cork Co-operative Marts have applied for planning permission to relocate to Corrin.

“The current Cork Marts site would be an ideal location, when that would become available,” she said.

Ms Pyne also criticised the number of houses proposed, the potential traffic that would ensue and the design of the hotel.

“To me, the design of the hotel looks like it could easily be conver-

ted into apartments — it’s a hotel we want, not apartments in disguised clothing,” she said.

However, the Mayor of Fermoy is resigned to the fact that the fate of the plans now rest with An Bord Pleanála.

“The jury is out — it’s now up to An Bord Pleanála to make their decision,” she said.

Local councillor and chair of the Fermoy Enterprise Board Michael Hanley has a different opinion of the plans, saying the development is an ‘absolute must’.

Calling last summer’s decision ‘the council’s greatest failure’, Cllr Hanley said he feels the community ‘badly needs’ such a development.

“We badly need a centre piece in the town where the community can get back to the days when there was a ballroom in the centre of the town.

“Such a facility is great PR for the town.

“But we’ve lost all that.

“There are more than

80 clubs in the town and a lot of people involved.

“When they want to hold a function they have no choice but to leave this town to hold a function elsewhere — that’s not acceptable,” he said.

Cllr Hanley believes the facility will provide numerous opportunities for Fermoy, including a pedestrian bridge from the quay side over to the development and extra parking facilities.

“This parking would be no cost to the public or council as it would be provided by the developer,” he said.

As for concerns over the development eating into the town’s last green area, Mr Hanley said: “That’s nonsense of the highest order,” adding that he believes a compromise could eventually be reached between councillors and developers.

“A good development like this is an absolute must if we want to secure the future viability and economic success of this town,” he said.

**O’Shea** robert.oshea@eecho.ie  
**on Monday**



*ROBERT O’SHEA* hears about a guy who suffered a massive hangover from toasties.

“THINK twice before inviting Sonya Thomas to dinner. On Wednesday, February 1, she won the World Grilled Cheese Eating Championship, eating 26 sandwiches in ten minutes at Planet Hollywood in Times Square.”

### PA news story

Last Wednesday, a member of the *Echo* staff thought it would be interesting to see how many toasted cheese sandwiches he could eat in a day. Sometimes, after evenings in the pub, he visits the Shangri La casino on the South Mall because they provide free toasties and coffee to patrons. It is here that we begin.

**00.05am:** First sandwich is eaten but casino staff look suspicious because our subject hasn’t placed any bets. Only he and slightly more sober work colleague are present in Shangri La. He places €10 on red at the roulette table and doubles his money. He orders another sandwich, then places another €10 on red and leaves €20 up after eating the second sandwich.

**12.40am:** On their way home they stop at the Golden Dragon on the corner of Douglas St where Kate serves up prawn toast slices with a thin sliver of cheese between them, for which she charges an extra 50c.

**1am:** There is plenty of cheese in his fridge but an absence of toastable yeast products in the kitchen sends our man to bed.

**10.15am:** Meets his parents in Kafka’s restaurant on Maylor St for breakfast. They show no obvious concern about his plan and pay for his first sandwich in daylight. Four.

**11am:** Enters the Peppercorn café on Pembroke St. Five and six.

**12.10pm:** Meets his brother for lunch at the Kopi-O Café on North Main St. Conversation steers to subject’s lack of love life: “Did you meet anyone out last night (Valentine’s evening)?” “No,” replies subject, who is clearly upset. “What about me is unlovable?” he asks as he stuffs the final quarter of his seventh toasted cheese of the day into his mouth.

**1.25pm:** Served eighth sandwich in Larry Tompkins. It is bought by work colleagues Kevin and Dave. When subject raises his mug to them and declares “To journalism” they pretend as if he didn’t do this and fail to clink mugs in a show of camaraderie.

**2.30pm:** Tony’s Bistro on North Main St. Our subject

is hitting a wall. After two quarters have disappeared (with the crust jettisoned) he nibbles on the side salad and tries to concentrate on his crossword. At 3 o’clock a waitress asks if he is finished. He shakes his head and eats the final quarter. It is time for a long walk.

**3.30pm:** He calls family doctor. He wants him to tell him to stop what he is doing. The doctor only says: “I don’t think you are the person who should be writing this article.” The subject, who is feeling jumpy from a high caffeine intake, doesn’t know how to react. Medical science obviously didn’t condone his behaviour, but neither did it condemn it. Our subject walks into the next place he sees and orders a sandwich. The man behind the counter says: “This is a chemist’s.”

**3.45pm:** To celebrate double figures and the first sandwich on the Northside, our subject orders a pint of Guinness with his food in Eugene’s of Shandon St. Looking over his crossword he sees he has written “cheese” into every space.

**5pm:** He arrives home and slumps on his bed.

**7.20pm:** Canty’s, one of the few bars in the city centre serving sandwiches at this hour (pre-prepared; ham and cheese only unfortunately), is the location. A work colleague named John buys our subject two sandwiches. He eats them. Eleven, 12.

### (A cinema break)

**11pm:** The Shangri La casino. Our subject drops €20 on poker, eats a sandwich, drops €20 on roulette (on black) and then eats another sandwich. He eats all the crust on No. 14. It is quarter to midnight.

In the taxi on the way home he requests the driver to turn down the heat to which the driver actually does reply, “Yeah, It’s a little toasty.” The passenger asks him not to mention toast. Then he asks him if he knows somewhere he can get a sandwich. The driver says for €20 he will make him one at his house. The passenger declines. When he gets home he eats a yoghurt.

**Epilogue:** Our subject reported last Thursday that the effects of a toasted cheese sandwich hangover are a deep rumbling gut, remorse, respect of your peers and strange toilet patterns. All he asks is that you don’t attempt anything like this yourself.

Remember, he is a trained journalist. He did it so you won’t have to.

“This is an absolute must if we want economic success.”