

# KILDARE CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN HITS THE ROAD

Daily checkpoints, speed detections and targeted patrols across Kildare are high on the agenda of the county's Christmas Road Safety Campaign, as Kildare County Council and the Gardaí have joined forces to focus on social responsibility, designated drivers and pedestrian safety during the festive season.

Christmas time is a very busy time on the roads and with the higher number of fatalities this year so far, every effort needs to be made to reduce road traffic collisions, which result in deaths and serious injuries on the roads," the Mayor of Kildare, Cllr Ivan Keatley, noted at the launch of Kildare's Christmas Road Safety campaign at Aras Chill Dara in Naas on 8 December.

Garda Inspector Oliver Henry said there will be 1,800 enforcement actions over the Christmas and New Year period, which will see checkpoints, MAT Checkpoints (Mandatory Alcohol Test) checkpoints, and speed detections in place each day, in addition to targeted patrols across the county.

"People need to take responsibility while out socialising; they need to know how they are getting home. For any driver who drinks alcohol over the festive season and takes a chance by driving that long or short distance home while under the influence, there is a very real and high chance that they will be stopped, breathalysed and arrested for drunk driving. The only way to avoid that is to be sober while driving, it's that simple," added Inspector Henry.

## DESIGNATED DRIVERS

Hotels, businesses and bar and nightclubs are supporting the 'Designated Drivers' initiative this Christmas while publicans in rural areas are once again helping to ensure the safety of their pedestrian customers by issuing them with high visibility vests.

Kildare County Council's Road Safety Officer Declan Keogh said that any help in promoting safer use of the roads is very welcome. "Pedestrian safety is a high priority at this time of year, and aside from the fact that every person should be responsible for their own personal safety, we're delighted that businesses and publicans are supporting our campaign and helping us along the way," he added.

"Personal responsibility goes hand in hand with social



Garda Inspector Oliver Henry and Kildare County Council's Road Safety Officer Declan Keogh pictured at the launch of the road safety campaign for Christmas. (Pic: Tony Keane)

responsibility. We are asking that every driver and pedestrian to be mindful of their intentions, their actions and just think of the outcome of a situation before it happens.

"Think before you get into the car after drinking alcohol, think before you head out for a walk without being visible, ask yourself what 'could' happen, and you will soon come to realise the possibilities. But the only way to avoid these situations is by taking the safe, responsible approach and doing the right thing".

## IMPACT OF COLLISIONS

The HSE National Ambulance Service and Kildare Fire Service are the first responders at the scene of a collision, and emergency service personnel know only too well the impact of a collision, which has resulted in the impact of a wrong decision.

Following the launch, Mark Tyrell, Kildare Manager of the HSE National Ambulance Service, noted that many collisions can be avoided and are often unnecessary. "We see the face of foolish behaviour on the roads daily, the carnage and the devastation that follows. The sad part about all of this is that, and all too often, many of these collisions could have been avoided and should have been avoided."

The Road Safety Officer presented Garda Inspector Henry with high visibility vests to distribute among the many pedestrians and cyclists that Gardaí encounter, while on patrol in the Kildare Division. Students from Gaelscoil Nas na Riogh were also provided with high visibility vests, road safety bags and vital information on how to become and remain as a safe, responsible road user.