

## Ballybeg shall rebuild "bit by bit"



Paul 'Rocky' Hanrahan, a founding member of St Saviours Boxing Club holding up some of the burnt and damaged new gear inside the clubhouse. | Photos: Noel Browne

The Ballybeg Bit by Bit Foundation – a committee set up to fundraise in aid of three local facilities destroyed in recent arson attacks – has called on Sports Minister Paschal Donohue to visit their community and pledge his support for the rebuild effort.

Chair of the fundraising group Willie Moore said the damage is still being assessed at St Saviours Boxing Club, St Saviours GAA clubhouse and the Ballybeg Youth and Resource Centre.

“At this stage, it looks like the roof will have to come off the two sports clubs, while the youth centre will have to be built from the ground up,” he said.

The response to date has been ‘humbling’, from both inside and outside the Ballybeg community, according to Mr Moore.

“People from all over Waterford attended a meeting last Tuesday night and, since then, we’ve been contacted by a cross section of groups and individuals who want to help us out.”

Mr Moore confirmed that the group had been in contact with FAI chief executive John Delaney, who had pledged to meet representatives next Saturday to see how his organisation could help. “The contents of all three youth buildings – the Youth and Resource Centre, the GAA club and the boxing club – were all completely wiped out,” Mr Moore continued.



Willie Moore, pictured addressing the Anti-Water Charge march on Saturday last, is chair of a fundraising group already hard at work in the wake of the Ballybeg arson attacks. | Photo: Mick Wall

“The soccer club was also hit, in that it shares dressing rooms with the boxing club. It’s mainly kids that suffered because adults tend to have their own gear that they take home with them but the kids’ equipment would be stored in clubs. We’d be happy to accept any kinds of donations, be it cash, goods or services. Anything that will help these clubs get back on their feet again.”

A fundraising ‘Big Band Night’ in aid of the Ballybeg fund has been organised for the Tower Hotel on Tuesday, February 24th and is due to get underway at 8pm, with tickets priced at €10.

Other events in the offing include a white collar boxing night, quizzes and a bucket collection but Mr Moore stressed that the latter will be publicised well in advance and warned people not to give any money to people collecting ‘unofficially’.



The Garda cordon at St Saviours Boxing Club in the wake of last week's arson attack.