

**FITZGERALD OPPOSES PLANS TO CLOSE 'ONE MAN' GARDA STATIONS IN
ANNASCAUL, BALLYFERRITER AND CAMP - 20th April 2009**

Dingle Local Election candidate Breandán Fitzgerald has written to the Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern asking him to outline the future plans for Annascaul, Ballyferriter, Camp, Clochan and Castlemaine Garda stations, following media reports they could be shut in the near future. The Fianna Fáil candidate is opposed to the closure of these stations as they help provide security to rural locations and also give the Gardaí a link to the local community.

“I was deeply concerned when I saw reports this morning suggesting that the Garda Stations Annascaul, Ballyferriter, Camp, Clochan and Castlemaine could be closed in the near future along with hundreds of other ‘one man’ stations around the country,” said Mr. Fitzgerald. The Garda Commissioner Fachtna Murphy is currently undertaking a national review of bases and it has been suggested that this will lead to some of the small rural stations being shut down. I really hope that this is not the case.”

“These stations play a hugely significant role in rural life. They provide a sense of security to these rural locations and ensures the Gardaí are involved with the local communities in these areas. Shutting down these stations would be counterproductive. It would mean that there would not be sufficient police cover in these rural areas, which would increase crime in these areas and mean that Gardaí from the larger, urban stations would have to travel out to these areas more and more.”

“It will also mean that the Gardaí will lose their foothold in these communities. They will no longer have a sense of what is happening in these areas and they will lose a lot of local knowledge that could help in crime prevention and solving.”

“I am deeply opposed to any moves to shut these stations and I have written to the Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern asking him to outline his plans for the future of these stations. I will also be making representations to the Garda Commissioner and I will relate any feedback I receive to the people of Annascaul, Ballyferriter, Camp, Clochan and Castlemaine at the earliest opportunity,” Mr. Fitzgerald concluded.

ENDS.