

# Press Releases - Costello launches "Virtual Clinic" - 10/08/00

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In a first of its kind, Councillor Eoin Costello, a Fine Gael Councillor with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, is using the latest advances in Internet telephony to provide his constituents with the opportunity to talk directly to their local representative without leaving their computer.

According to Councillor Costello "It's a real sign of the times. More and more people in my area are living in apartments, making it impossible to have conversations on the doorstep. Traditional meeting points such as the corner shop or local post office are disappearing. As a result it has become more difficult to have face-to-face contact with people!

*"I hope that my "Virtual Clinic" is one way around that. Through my site I am accessible to people 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."*

According to Councillor Costello "Many people are uncomfortable coming to clinics and would like an easier way of seeking help from local representatives. The level of email enquiries and comments I have been receiving from constituents has risen dramatically in the last six months." According to Councillor Costello the Internet is uniquely suited to Dun Laoghaire Rathdown as statistics from PMI show Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County to have one of the highest levels of Internet penetration in Ireland.

Councillor Costello's "Virtual Clinic" allows full two way spoken conversations over the Internet. "This is the way the Internet is going, Internet telephony is extremely cheap and with recent improvements in technology conversations are clear and unbroken." To use the clinic you need a mike and speakers. The clinic is open on Saturday mornings from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm.

The "Virtual Clinic" is just one of the services that Councillor Costello provides at his site ([www.eoincostello.ie](http://www.eoincostello.ie)). Constituents may email a query directly from the site, request a ticket to the public

gallery at the next council meeting or join Councillor Costello's mailing list for news of developments at the Council. "With my site I am trying to satisfy a growing need out there. Many people contact me in frustration at a lack of information about road programmes, planning applications. People can find a huge range of information about the programmes and plans of the County Council on my site."

Councillor Costello also runs a number of petitions from his site. He is currently collecting names for a petition to send to the UK Government asking that Sellafield nuclear reprocessing facility be closed down.

He provides a link on this page to a recent exposé on Sellafield that Greenpeace launched.

His site contains all the press releases issued by him in the last year and letters to a number of Ministers and government officials. Among those is a letter to Seamus Brennan criticising him for ignoring Dun Laoghaire Rathdown when he was dishing out the Millennium millions. There are also photos of the prize night of the School & University Internet Awards, organised by Councillor Costello, which included Denis O'Brien amongst the judges and Mary O'Rourke presented the prizes.

*"Many pundits have said that the Internet is a negative force, driving people into more insular and introverted lifestyles. My experience has been the opposite. I have made many friends all over the world through the Internet. I hope that my new website will become a useful resource to the community and help constituents who find trying to get information out of local government departments and the county council a difficult and frustrating process."*