

**Embargoed Thurs May 7 12.00pm**

## **People Before Profit Alliance Launches Local Election Campaign.**

### **Alliance calls for jobs, high quality public services and real democracy not bails outs for bankers and developers.**

**The People Before Profit Alliance today launched its local election campaign and called on the electorate to punish the government by voting for candidates committed to radical change. Richard Boyd Barrett said**

"Fianna Fail have wrecked our country. Along with bankers, developers and a super-wealthy elite, they championed a culture of greed that has driven the economy into ground. Now they want us to pay the price for their mess. Hundreds of thousands now languish on dole queues, workers are to have their incomes slashed and most disgustingly of all, pensioners, children and the very poorest are under attack. They do nothing to end the situation where the 50 richest people in this country have enough personal wealth to pay for all the cut backs in the last budget ten times over. Disgracefully, the Green Party have chosen to abandon political principle for power and prop up the regime responsible for such obscene injustice. Fianna Fail and the Greens must be driven from office and face political extinction.

However, the alternative must not simply be more of the same. Fine Gael intend even more savage cut-backs in public services and they refuse point blank to call for taxes on wealth. The only way to address the current crisis and eliminate the gross inequalities in our society, is to take the wealth -the banks, natural resources, building land - into public ownership and impose a tax regime that closes the gap between rich and poor. Jobs, public services, socially useful industry, and the needs of ordinary people must be the priority not the wealth and profits of a minority. That's the alternative the People Before Profit Alliance offers."

The Alliance is running 13 candidates in Dublin City, Dublin South, Dun Laoghaire, Waterford, Tralee and Dundalk (see candidates profiles which accompany this statement). Candidates include

- Dublin City Councillor Joan Collins (Crumlin Kimmage);
- Richard Boyd Barrett (Dun Laoghaire) who narrowly missed being elected to the Dail in the last General Election; and
- Ex Waterford Crystal worker and Shop Steward Donnie Fell who will run in Waterford City

#### **Mr Fell said**

"The Waterford Crystal workers were treated disgracefully. Many workers have lost their jobs and have seen their pension disappear. We want a pension protection fund for all workers and a programme of public investment to create jobs. The issue of unemployment is now the number one issue facing the country."

## At National Level

Among other issues the Alliance will be campaigning for :

- **Nationalisation of the banking system.** The credit system should be used to eliminate financial speculation and to support job creation.
- **A fair tax system.** We want a levy on the wealthy and the abolition of all tax loopholes. Introduce a higher tax rate for top earners
- **Investment in public services** such as health, education and transport. Give free access to health and education as a right and reverse the cuts.
- **Action on unemployment.** Use the skills of unemployed workers to build the houses, schools and hospitals we badly need. We need national scheme of housing insulation to allow for energy saving. Unemployed workers should be guaranteed retraining and access to education.
- **Action on housing.** Use empty homes held by developers and speculators for social housing. No evictions and a freeze on mortgages repayments for those who have lost their jobs.

## At Local Level

People Before Profit believes that local people should have a real say over what happens in their communities. Local democracy has been steadily eroded by a government which has increasingly transferred decision making from elected Councillors to un-elected council managers. **People before profit Councillors will organise regular public assemblies to keep people informed and to hear their views on issues that affect communities.**

- **All decisions affecting local communities should be taken by elected councillors.** Directly elected Mayors or Council Chairpersons should replace Council managers. The salaries of City and County managers should be capped.
- **We will oppose all local charges.** We opposed the introduction of bin charges: some of our members were imprisoned as a result. We will oppose water charges. Local service should be funded by a fair central tax system.
- **The needs of communities must come before the needs of developers.** Community facilities, regeneration and social and affordable housing should be provided as a right and not through deals with developers.

## Need For A Radical Alternative

People Before Profit says its time to create a political movement which will represent ordinary people and put their needs first. **Councillor Joan Collins said**

“The current political situation demands radical change in Ireland. We are not interested in doing deals with the political parties which have failed time and time again to address the issues that affect workers, the unemployed and the poor. Our elected representatives will work to support all those who want to organise for real change rather than engaging in back room deals with City and County managers”.

Ends

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