

# A breath of new life

## Having twins inspires father to invent new baby monitor

By IAN WATTERS

**DAD-of-two Paddy Healy from Drogheda has his twins to thank for his new invention after coming up with the idea of a new baby monitor when his wife announced that she was pregnant with twins.**

Paddy (37) lives in Drogheda with his wife Susan. He is originally from Glenmore Drive while she is originally from Newfield. Their twin girls Elise and Millie were born 22 months ago.

"I knew that a baby monitor was an essential piece of kit for new parents. Knowing we were having twins I noticed some downfalls in the models which were then available on the market, so I decided to create my own," he explained.

Paddy is a Clinical Engineer in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital and has worked there for 13 years. He has a degree from DKIT in Product Design Engineering and has always been working away on different designs.

The baby-breathing monitor which Paddy came up with makes use of wearable technology in conjunction with a monitoring device. It can monitor essential factors for a baby's health such as breathing, temperature and a medical grade electrocardiogram (ECG). Over time, the monitor's advanced software



■ Paddy and Susan Healy with their twin girls Elise and Millie.

becomes familiar with baby's unique habits and patterns, in order to eliminate false alarms.

He got in touch with 'VITAL - Ideas Connected to Business', a €2.56m initiative funded by the EU's INTERREG IVA Programme. Project Director Kieran Fegan found a ready match for Paddy and his product in Shnuggle, an internationally successful, award-winning baby products business based in

Newtownards.

Adam Murphy, Managing Director of Shnuggle, stated, "We were very impressed with Paddy's invention and it's a perfect fit for our brand and the customer base which we have established. We have signed a licensing agreement and are currently in the midst of an extensive testing period, with the aim of launching the final product within the next two years."

Paddy told the *Drogheda Leader* that he hopes that the final product will be on the shelves in the next 12 to 18 months.

"The first prototypes are being made at the moment in China. When they are done I will do some testing and set up focus groups. It is very exciting and I am delighted at the support I have gotten. Being a parent has really made me look at things in a new way," he added.

# Worries expressed over social housing plans

By GORDON HATCH

FEARS have been expressed that a new Government plan will drastically reduce the number of social houses being built in Drogheda.

Sinn Féin's Imelda Munster has described the governments new "Urban Regeneration Bill" as shocking and "a Thatcherite approach which will bring an end to direct council social housing provision."

Cllr Munster was referring to a recent meeting of the Council's Corporate Policy Group where the details of the new Bill were outlined.

"It is in effect a wholesale privatisation of social housing," said Cllr Munster who continued, "At a recent meeting members of the CPG in Louth were told local authorities will not be given any more funding to build social housing instead housing delivery and sourcing will be through private developers through leasing and voluntary housing bodies from 2017 onwards."

The new bill has halved to 10 percent the amount of land zoned for residential use that must be provided by a developer for social and affordable



■ Cllr Imelda Munster

housing.

There is also an option for developers to lease 10 percent of any development back to the council where previously they were obliged to transfer the ownership of this portion to the local authority.

"This will result in an end to direct council house provision and cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions every year paying developers and private

landlords taxpayers

money to lease houses."

"Outsourcing to private developers and landlords will mean families will never get a home they can call their own and will be easy prey to landlords forever and only compound the housing crisis we are currently in and the huge distress it is causing thousands of families in Louth alone," Cllr Munster said.

# 19th century window smashed

By IAN WATTERS

THERE has been high condemnation of those responsible for smashing what is believed to be a 19th century window during a break in to the Highlanes Gallery on Laurence Street in Drogheda over the weekend.

The right hand lower pane was smashed to gain entry and a small sum of cash was taken. The historic window has been repaired by placing modern glass in to seal the gap.

The gallery is sited in the former Drogheda Franciscan Church which is known as the 'High Lane Church.' The Franciscans gifted the property to the people of Drogheda when they ended their 760 year association with the town back in 2000.

The buildings date from the early 19th century, though elements date back to earlier times and include the former Franciscan burial crypts. The windows are a part of the history of the building and there has been shock expressed over the vandalism. The Gardaí are continuing their investigation.



■ The window that was damaged.

# A new chapter

## Local author's last book as a ghostwriter is a heart-breaking tale

By IAN WATTERS

LOCAL author Nicola Pierce has finished her career as a ghostwriter with the book 'Nobody Will Believe You' which tells the tale of Mary Manning who was abused by her stepfather.

Nicola is a children's author and she is working on her third one now after the success of 'Spirit of the Titanic' and 'City of Fate'. She has written a number of books as a ghostwriter including 'I Was a Boy in Belsen' which tells the story of concentration camp survivor Tomi Reichental.

Mary Manning was ten years old when she first met her stepfather, Sean McDarby. From the very beginning he seemed to pay her special attention; his praise and compliments quickly won her trust. Then he started touching her in ways she didn't like. When she was twelve, he raped her.

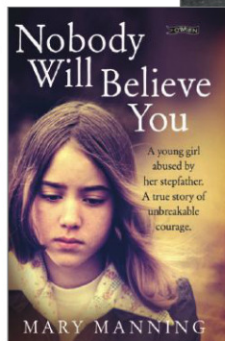
The next 20 years were filled with harrowing abuse as McDarby continued to rape Mary. She became pregnant for the first time at sixteen and gave birth to a baby boy. She miscarried at the age of

seventeen. She went on to have three more children, as a result of continued rapes, by the time she was twenty-one.

She escaped to America for a while but this resulted in her children being taken into care. But when she returned, she landed in a trap : her stepfather was there to meet her, and the abuse resumed.

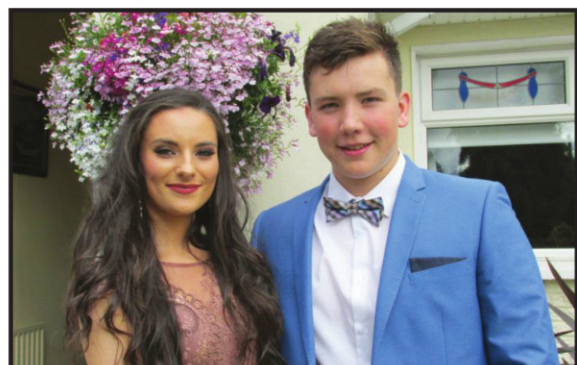
Finally, after years of abuse – years when justice was denied at every turn – Mary met Karl, now her husband, and she found the strength and courage to break free. Against appalling odds she created a safe place for her children and reclaimed her life.

"Mary's story raises some very uncomfortable questions for us. How was it possible for this abuse to go on under the nose of the authorities? Mary was warned by her abuser that she would not be believed and indeed this is what happened. How is it that a young woman in 1980s & 1990s Ireland could be so under the influence of this man that she was virtually powerless to get away?" is stated by O'Brien Press who published the book.



■ Nicola Pierce

## Off to the ball



■ Robert Walker and Anna Stringer pictured before their departure to St Mary's DS Graduation held recently in Dunboyne Castle.