

National Lifeguard Training Centre to open in Tramore

A newly-built National Lifeguard Training Centre will be officially opened on the Lower Promenade in Tramore, Co Waterford today (Mon, March 9).

The first of its kind in Ireland, the €500,000 centre has been developed through a unique partnership between Tramore Surf Lifesaving Club, Irish Water Safety and Waterford City & County Council with support from Waterford Leader Partnership.

The three-storey building has a spectacular ocean-themed design reflecting its seafront location. It will accommodate Tramore Surf Lifesaving Club on a year-round basis and Waterford City & County Council's beach lifeguards during the summer season. The lifeguards will use an observation deck on the third floor that provides excellent views across Tramore Bay.

Speaking ahead of the opening, Cllr James Tobin, Mayor of the City & County of Waterford, said: "This is a tremendous development for Tramore and all who enjoy the waters off one of Ireland's premier seaside resorts. Surfing and a whole range of other watersports have really soared in popularity and Tramore is in a tremendous position to benefit from that. Safety has to be the first priority for anyone taking to the water and there is no doubt that lives will be saved as a result of this centre being delivered.

"One of the things that I am particularly pleased about is how Tramore Surf Lifesaving Club, Irish Water Safety and Waterford City & County Council have been able to work together to create this world-class facility that is the first in the country but which would also stand up to comparison with what's available internationally."

Cllr Lola O'Sullivan, Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Waterford and chair, Irish Water Safety (Waterford), added: "As someone who's lived in Tramore all my life and who spends as much time as I can around the water, I'm thrilled to see the National Lifeguard Training Centre open on the Lower Promenade. The teamwork and indeed hard work that has gone into bringing this project over the line has been hugely impressive to be a part of and all of the volunteers involved should be tremendously proud of the standard of what is now on offer here.

"Summer 2015 will be the first season when this Centre will be operational and the rescue boat and other emergency facilities here will allow for an even better lifeguard service to be provided. Bringing together that vital public service and the Tramore Surf Lifesaving Club which has operated for more than 25 years is a creative way to ensure people using the water are safe and that we continue to train lifesavers to the highest standards. One of the most encouraging things about the lifesaving club's membership of 100+ people is that the largest number are in the eight-14 age range so we are continuing to train the lifesavers of tomorrow.

"Aside from the obvious water safety and community benefits of having the National Lifeguard Training Centre in Tramore, there is also a positive economic impact for the town from increased visitor numbers as people from around Ireland come to Tramore for lifesaving training programmes. The striking design of the building which wouldn't be out of place in Miami or Sydney also enhances the Lower Promenade which has had a real renaissance over recent years."

Michael Cuddihy, chair, Tramore Surf Lifesaving Club, added: "This new facility in Tramore will be a huge asset to our club but also to the wider community. It will allow us cater for the ever growing interest in surf lifesaving, a discipline in which Tramore has produced several international competitors. It has been a long journey to deliver this Centre but the quality of what has been created makes that all worthwhile.

"Waterford has seen too many lives lost at sea and - along with more cautious use of the water by all of us - this new Centre will help make Tramore Bay safer for everyone as well as training lifesavers who will work across Ireland and overseas. On the club's behalf, I want to acknowledge all of those from Tramore and beyond who have helped bring this project to completion. We now look forward to it being fully operational for the fast-approaching peak summer season."

Ends - Friday, March 6, 2015.

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