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# COMMUNITY VOICE

EVERY FORTNIGHT

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## New bridge may not open for four years

The new bridge and entrance road into Connolly Hospital built at a cost of €6m will be completed at the end of this month. However *Community Voice* has learned that the new bridge which will allow direct access into the hospital from the N3 is unlikely to be fully opened for up to four years.

The matter was raised at a recent meeting of Fingal County Council's area committee by Cllr. Mags Murray following concerns expressed by the manager and staff of the hospital about staff access to the hospital after the opening of the new bridge.

However it has now transpired that the bridge will not now open until such time as upgrading work on the M50 including the new "spaghetti junction" type interchange with the N3 is completed.

However according to Michael Lorigan, the council's director of services "it was a condition of the planning permission for the new hospital that a new entrance onto Scott's roundabout be built to stop traffic using Mill Road and Blanchardstown Village. However it was also a condition of that planning permission that the junction of the completed bridge and access with the public road shall not open to traffic until such date as is determined by the council and the National Roads Authority (NRA)".

Speaking at the meeting Mr. Lorigan said "let's be quite clear - it would not be realistic to open the bridge until after the opening of the M50 upgrade." *Community Voice* understands that this it could be 2012 before this upgrade is completed.

Defending the delay in allowing the new entrance to open, Mr. Lorigan said "I accept that it is unusual to have a major piece of infrastructure provided but not used. However you have seen for yourself what can happen to capital allocations if you don't take them up when they are available. In four years time, if we had a different economic climate we could still be looking for the funding to do the job."

Speaking to *Community Voice*, Shay Smith, manager of Connolly Hospital explained how the hospital had been unaware of this situation until recently. "In anticipation of the bridge being completed, we prepared a traffic management plan which we present-

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Elliott O'Neill (6) from Edgewood Lawn with the prize-winning fish he caught in the opening day angling competition on the River Tolka. See full story on page 7

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