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Hospice site approved

After a number of years of fundraising and much lobbying the long-awaited site for a hospice for Dublin 15 has been approved by the Government.

The good news is further enhanced by the announce-

ment that an extra 3.88 acres of land is being given in addition to the 3 acres originally sought by St Francis Hospice for the project.

According to Ethel McKenna, Chief Executive of St. Francis Hospice, "we very

much appreciate the work of Minister Brian Lenihan in bringing the proposal to the cabinet table and for his support in getting this approval."

The Minister told *Community Voice* "I welcome the allocation of additional land to the St. Francis Hospice project. The original project included a two-storey building, internal therapeutic gardens and car parking. This additional land will provide a greater amount of breathing space between the building and the site boundary thus maintaining the woodland setting and providing a more peaceful environment for patients, staff and visitors."

According to the Minister he had actively promoted the project because of "the important role which St. Francis Hospice plays in providing hospice services to those living in communities throughout north Dublin city and county." He also promised to work with the Hospice in whatever way he could to assist in the expansion of its services.

Welcoming the news Ethel McKenna said "we now have the documentation we need to lodge our planning applica-

tion. We have posted notices at Connolly Hospital and on the site and put an ad in the newspaper. On Monday we will be lodging our planning application with Fingal County Council.

While a decision on this planning application will not be made until the end of August, Ms. McKenna is confident of being able to make an early start on the construction of the new hospice. "Our architects have told us that a lot of the preparatory work has already been done on the tender documents and if our planning application goes through they would hope to have work starting on site by October."

The additional 3.88 acres will make a big difference to the standard of facility being provided. "When we started work on the project we thought three acres would be adequate for the building. However a recent international report on palliative care recommended that all rooms should be single rooms and while our hospice in Raheny, on which the Blanchardstown building is based, is itself a centre of excellence, we

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Skateboarding action at the recent Red Bull Local Heroes event in Millennium Park photo: Greg Kelly

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