



■ Coillte, the State forestry service, in the face of fierce local opposition, formally abandoned their plan to fell 70 of the remaining magnificent Dartrey oak trees at a packed public meeting in the White Horse Hotel last Monday night. Photographed after the meeting were Coillte representatives and the main organisers of the protest. Seated l to r: George Beirne, Forest Manager, Coillte; P.J. Fitzpatrick, District Manager, Coillte; and Eric Johnston, Resource Manager, Coillte. Standing l to r: Andrew McCaul; Davey Foster; Cormac McCaul; Aisling Murray; Owen Ward and Niall McCaul, as well as three concerned local children. [Photo: Brian Mulligan].

Reprieve for Dartrey Oaks

by Sean McMahon

THE Cootehill 'Save the Oaks' action committee, established in recent weeks to prevent the felling of a number of 200 year oaks in Dartrey Wood has won the day and Coillte representatives told a public meeting in the White Horse Hotel on Monday night that they no longer propose to go ahead with their plans to fell the valuable oak trees in Dartrey estate.

Announcing this momentous decision the Coillte District Manager P.J. Fitzpatrick said they had decided to suspend the current plan to harvest oak trees and beech trees in Dartrey and this was in response to concerns expressed by the local community.

All present at the meeting

gave a warm welcome to this announcement and one of the people spearheading the campaign to save the oaks Cormac McCaul stated in a jointly agreed press statement "we very much appreciate Coillte's level of consultation with us in relation to Dartrey and their decision to stop operations and withdraw their felling licence".

Mr. McCaul thanked the local community for their energised approach to date and he was confident that this community spirit could be harnessed in unison.

"Coillte is fully committed to working closely with us to ensure that this wood is still around for future generations to enjoy", he said.

Mr Fitzpatrick acknowledged that some work will require to

be done in the short term in order to make the wood safe for visitors.

"We will be working with the local group to examine the roadside trees and assess them for damage and decay, some of which will require tree surgery".

There are a total of 439 oak trees growing in the 13 acre wood on Dartrey Estate and it is estimated that the trees were planted in 1820. The beech trees are much younger and were planted in 1949.

Coillte will be planting vacant areas of the Forest towards the end of this year and additional broad leaf trees will be included. They will also be opening up pathways and roadways.

George Beirne, Coillte told the meeting that a lot of hedge cutting will have to be carried out

before the Wildlife nesting starts.

"We are enhancing most of the roads in Dartrey this year". Aisling Murray from the Action Committee thanked the people from Coillte for coming to the meeting and said "we are all very pleased with the outcome and very grateful".

She also thanked the Public Representatives who came to the rescue in their hour of need. "Some great ideas have come forward out of this campaign and the community will now think about Dartrey in a different way", she said.

The meeting also addressed the vexed question of Deer culls and consultation is ongoing between Coillte and Cavan County Council on the matter.