



Donie O'Sullivan, Jack Fitzgerald and Damien McCarthy photographed outside St Mary's of the Angels, residential care home & St. Francis special needs school-the committee are desperately seeking funding from Kerry County Council to have the road repaired. Photograph by Sally MacMonagle.

Anger as St Mary of the Angels misses out on CLAR cash

By **STEPHEN FERNANE**

AN application for €55,000 by St Mary of the Angels to repair pathways around its grounds has been refused, leaving parents 'disgusted' over what they say is a vital amenity in need of repair for residents with special needs.

In all, 20 submissions were made by groups in Kerry for projects under the '2017 CLAR Programme' of which three were successful. However, The Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht informed Kerry County Council of the decision not to grant St Mary of the Angels funding, citing the scheme as 'oversubscribed' and that additional funds may be made available later in the year.

But the decision has angered parents who say the pathway is used daily by 77 disabled residents, and 55 special needs children who attend St Francis' Special School which is built on the grounds of St Mary of the Angels.

"It is the clearest indication yet how far down this government's priorities towards disabled people are when a project like this is overlooked. This is hypocrisy of the highest order," said Jack

Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the Parents' and Relatives' Association.

Mr Fitzpatrick added that while there is much anger over the decision not to grant St Mary's funding, it is not directed against the successful projects: Portmagee Development Group received €34,188 for an Astro Tourism Project; Curraheen National School, Glenbeigh, got €50,000 for a handball alley and Firies National School was awarded €50,000 for an outdoor playground.

"In no way do we begrudge the groups that got money, but the point I want to make is how a road for disabled children is not deserving? This driveway is essential for residents, many of whom would have sensory problems and need to be walked by SNAs on the pathway.

"Some of them have even fallen it's in such poor condition. Later in the year is no good as the works need to be done now when the school is closed.

"The parents are very disappointed to say the least. How a government department can overlook funds for this project has left everyone here disgusted," Mr Fitzpatrick added.