

# Beaufort farm sale sparks concern for disability centre

## Sale gathers criticism from families at St Mary of the Angels centre

BY SINEAD KELLEHER

THE St Mary of the Angels Parents and Relatives Association is to contact the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood to allay their concerns over the effects the sale of land may have on the Beaufort facility.

It emerged last week that the order is to sell a 110 acre farm, known as Whitefield Farm – part of the land donated to them by Denis and Mary Doyle – at auction later this month.

The farm adjoins the St Mary of the Angels facility for persons with intellectual disabilities in Beaufort and parents and relatives who have children living at the vital facility are concerned that the sale may have an effect on those living there.

They also argue that the sale of this farm goes against what the Doyle family wanted.

The farm was intended to help support those living in St Mary of the Angels which was founded by the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood.

The Doyle family in Beaufort donated all the land to the order after their daughter became a nun. They used this land to set up St Mary of the Angels and ran it until 2005.

The care facility was then handed over to St John of Gods who now run the service. Up until 2005 the farm was used to support the facility, including growing local produce for the residents of St Mary of the Angels. Part of the farm was leased and this income was used to support the residents as well.

Now the farm, which has remained in the hands of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, is to be sold.

The land, totalling 110.5 acres in a scenic area of mid Kerry, is expected to exceed one million euro when it goes under the hammer at the end of the month.

Chairman of the St Mary of the Angels Parents and Relatives Association, Jack Fitzpatrick, said that the news is very ‘disappointing’ and they fear it could have a detrimental effect on the residents.

“We are very disappointed. The first we heard of it was last week when we were there and someone came to take a look. The land was left to the



Jack Fitzpatrick, whose son, lives at St Mary of the Angels.

order to help those with intellectual disabilities and now it is being taken back,” he said.

“The main feature of St Mary of the Angels is that it is tranquil and now we don’t know what will happen.

“It is agricultural land. At the moment, there is little interference but that could change. It could potentially be development land or used for other agricultural purposes,” added Mr Fitzpatrick.

“It is very worrying for us.”

Mr Fitzpatrick said that the group intend to contact the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood to try and assess the impact it could have on those residing there.

The land is being sold by Tom Spillane & Company Ltd, Killarney. They say it’s the first time they will bring a holding of this size to the market. They expect plenty of interest in it as the land is located close to Beaufort village.

The auction takes place on Thursday, May 30.