

Foley meets with St Mary of the Angels group

BY SINEAD KELLEHER

MINISTER for Education, Norma Foley, is supporting a campaign by St Mary of the Angels (SMOA) parent and relative group, to ensure the facility remains in use for those with disabilities, amid fears that St John of God (SJOG) could sell the property.

The charity, which currently runs the services, at St Mary of the Angels, has threatened to pull out of providing disability services across the country, if more funding is not provided by September 30, 2021. They have also cautioned they may have to sell assets, which include St Mary of the Angels in Beaufort, to meet a current deficit. Worried parents and relatives whose family members live at St Mary of the Angels have mounted a campaign to ensure the facility is not sold.

They met with Minister Foley, last week to voice their concerns.

The meeting, organised by Minister Foley, was attended by Minister of State at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth with responsibility for Disability Anne Rabbitte and a number of her officials.

This was the first opportunity for parents and guardians to put forward their views and concerns to Minister Rabbitte regarding the future of St Mary of the Angels.

The SMOA group asked for a guarantee that St Mary of the Angels and its land would remain in trust for the benefit of its residents.

During the meeting the representatives also asked to be included in the decision making process and have a more active management role in the running of the facility.

Minister Foley said it was important that the facility is utilised for the current and future residents.

“One of the key points here is that St Mary of the Angels and its land was entrusted to the provider for the benefit of its residents and future residents. It is important going forward that this remains the case and that the facility and its land will always be utilised for the benefit of its current and future residents. I want to express my personal thanks to Minister Rabbitte for agreeing to the meeting and for her positive engagement and commitment to keep working with the families and guardians for the benefit of this vital service,” she said.