

information to Offaly County Council on their plans for the site.

Cemex are seeking permission for the retention and completion of existing sand and gravel extraction over an area of 2.25 hectares at Ballyduff off the Clara Road.

Heritage watchdog An Taisce wrote to the County Council saying the need for the project had not been justified and a concerned Tullamore man, Peadar O Maolain, has said the Eiscir Riada must be protected.

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the clients are also nervous about speaking

Badger Baiting On The Increase In Tullamore Area

Camilla McLoughlin

THERE has been a significant increase in the practice of badger baiting in Offaly and Laois since 2011 and in particular in the Tullamore area. Places worst affected include Ballard and Charleville Wood.

However, because the cruel blood sport is normal-

ly clandestine, very few people are prosecuted.

Normally when the Wildlife rangers come across a 'persecuted badger sett', the badger has either been killed or taken, and the sett filled back in.

Conservation Ranger with the Parks and Recreation Service, Mr Noel Bugler, explained that Badger Baiting involves digging out a badger sett. Then often a dog such as a terrier is sent into the hole to locate the badger which is a protected species. The dog can be equipped with a locator or beeper which allows the owners to know where the dog is underground.

Sometimes the dog will fight the badger underground, however, usually the sett is dug further and the badger taken out. A fight then ensues between the animals.

Mr Bugler, said a badger can sometimes be taken away from prying eyes to a fighting arena for organised fights where the badger is put up against a number of dogs. Often the cubs are left behind in the sett.

Others hit the badger in order to weaken and disorientate it for the fight. However, it's not just the badger that is seriously injured during the fight.

Mr Bugler said he has seen dogs with their bottom jaw missing as a result of fighting with a badger who will protect their young at all costs.

'We would appeal for anyone who comes across suspicious activity, or who see people going onto land with lurchers or terriers or who may be carrying spades or shovels, to either call the Gardai or the local Wildlife Ranger,' he said.

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Food Waste Recycling Info. Morning



Pictured from left to right at an information morning, organised by Offaly County Council, were Caroline Clancy, Environmental Officer, Mirian Healy, Waste Enforcement Officer, Michael Malone, Litter Warden, and Padraig Minnock, Litter Warden. Log onto www.offaly.ie for more information. 0H48-3573

Three Men Caught Digging Out Badger Sett In Charleville Woods

10%

THREE men caught digging out a badger sett in Charleville Woods were prosecuted under the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended, at Monday's sitting of the local district court.

State Solicitor Mr John Hughes told the court that on August 3rd 2013, Conservation Officer, Mr Noel Bugler was in Charleville Wood when he heard what sounded like an animal in pain. He noted two parked vans in the vicinity and walking through the woods saw two dogs chained to a tree. He then came across a number of people standing around

a badger sett and in the process of digging.

Mr Bugler believed Tony Kerrigan, (19) John Ward, and Patrick Ward (27) all with addresses at Kilcruttin, Tullamore were in the act of badger baiting. Pick Axes, spades, shovels and bars were at the scene.

Mr Hughes explained to Judge Catherine Staines, how during badger baiting the badger is dug out and the dogs and badger are provoked into attack. Usually there is onside gambling and the fight between the animals is often video taped. However, he stressed that Mr Bugler had not seen anything like this occur.

Defending solicitor Mr Donal Farrelly said there was no suggestion that this was the offence, and the men didn't see this in the way it was described.

Judge Catherine Staines intervened to ask Mr Farrelly why the three men were there. 'Was it to observe it (badger) in its natural habitat', she said.

Mr Farrelly continued that the defendants had seen it on Youtube and they wanted to use it to exercise their dogs. He continued that it was an innocent practice and they would release the badger.

He said the dogs were two small terriers and the men looked after dogs and had

no history of this type of event.

Mr Noel Bugler told Judge Staines that terriers were often used in badger baiting.

Judge Catherine Staines said it was appalling to bait animals. However, she said there was no evidence to say the defendants came across a badger, or baited it.

She told Mr Farrelly that she had concerns for his clients if that's the kind of sport they engage in. She said her immediate reaction was to impose a three month custodial sentence. However, she would take into account the huge cost of putting someone in

prison and the fact that they had children.

She imposed 240 hours community service in lieu of three months in prison on each of the men. In addition they were ordered to pay €300 each to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

She put the case back to January 26th next year for a community service report, warning that she didn't want to hear that they were unsuitable for community service, 'They can work', she said.

She added that if she heard that there was a lack of co-operation she would impose a sentence.

Work On New Classrooms And Science Lab Begins At SHS

SACRED Heart School staff, management, parents and students are delighted to welcome the start of their new building.

Biology and Ag Science all achieving almost twice the national average.

The SHS promotes Science at junior cert level and also has an extensive science

Medicine, Physiotherapy and Human Health and Disease proving particularly popular with students over the last three years.

The building project

Local Man Weds Down Under

