

KILMACANOGUE AND DISTRICT HORSE SHOW

Safety counts at Kilmacanogue

■ Mary Flynn

SAFETY is the order of the day at the upcoming popular Kilmacanogue Show, which will be held on Saturday, July 28th, at Enniskerry village.

The issue of safety at shows nationwide received a huge boost this year from Minister of Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring. Marking an important investment in rural communities, Minister Ring made a special grant available through the Irish Shows Association (ISA) which advised that shows spend this welcome windfall wisely with an emphasis on enhancing safety, especially child safety. With children and their ponies making up more than half the 500 plus entries at Kilmacanogue Horse Show every year, this advice is being followed closely.

"Safety for everyone at our show is of the utmost importance. Ensuring we're ready for every conceivable situation makes all the preparations and attention to detail well worthwhile. This year's big challenge is making sure the ground in the rings remains soft and safe as the exceptional hot dry spell continues," according to Georgina Masterson, chairperson of the Kilmacanogue and District Horse Show.

"Huge local effort is involved as our show is run entirely by volunteers with all proceeds going to support lo-

cal charities," she added.

Kilmacanogue Horse Show attracts a wonderful mix of people of all ages and ability who team up with horses, ponies, donkeys, sheep, dogs and ducks to perform at their best.

With the experience of 45 years, Kilmacanogue Show has an army of trained Safety Stewards in place to relax human competitors harassed by their own intense efforts and the frisky reactions of their animals.

"Keeping pedestrians and animals separate is crucial for safety. There is a lot of work in stewarding walkways, horse ways and 'gates' to maintain safe crossings," says Kilmacanogue show safety officer Judy O'Toole. "This year we are really delighted to have volunteers from our local charities - Purple House Cancer Support, Spinal Injuries Ireland, Newcourt School and Lakers (supporting children and adults with disabilities) - join with the Irish Kidney Association in manning this at the show."

A medical doctor along with the Order of Malta will be on the showgrounds all day. As on previous years at Kilmacanogue, the Order of Malta will bring an ambulance and their team of First Aid responders. A veterinary surgeon will also be present to make sure animal welfare is well looked after.

More on www.kilmacanoguehorseshow.com.