**Five schools make final of inaugural Shannon Foynes Port Company competition**

***Transition Year schools competition attracts huge entry***

Five schools, drawn from counties Clare, Kerry and Limerick, have been shortlisted out of a total of 34 entries for a new Transition Year competition designed to give students an understanding of the pivotal role that ports play in the life of the region.

The schools - Causeway Comprehensive, Co. Kerry; Shannon Comprehensive, Co. Clare; Scoil Mhuire agus Íde, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick; CBS Sexton Street, Limerick City and Salesian College, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick -  will now go on to contest the final on February 9th next of the Shannon Foynes Port Company Transition Year schools competition.  The winning school will receive a €2,000 cheque with each team member (teams are confined to a maximum of seven) receiving an iPad.

The theme of the competition, which will be run every two years, for this its inaugural year is ‘The Importance of Ports in the Mid-West Region’ and was devised to encourage students to develop a greater understanding of ports and their function in modern economies.

It will also serve to foster greater awareness amongst students of their local region, particularly on the businesses and resources which play an important role in its development.  The competition was open to schools in the three counties - Clare, Limerick and Kerry – with shoreline on the Shannon Estuary.

The broad theme allows for students to approach the issue from a number of perspectives, which could include business, geography, environmental science or economics.

The majority of the 34 participating schools availed of the opportunity to visit the port facilities to research their project and got an insight into the breadth of work engaged in as they were given tours under the supervision of Shannon Foynes Port Company’s Community Liaison Officer Captain Hugh Conlon and its Schools Coordinator Evelyn Adams.

Shannon Foynes Port Company CEO Pat Keating said that the competition was giving students an insight into the role that ports play in their every-day lives.  “We are very pleased with the interest shown in our first schools competition. We see this as a vital initiative as part of our mission to engage with the community and region.

“So much activity happens in our ports that impacts positively on virtually every household across the region, from fuels to heat our homes or feedstuffs to feed livestock, and a programme like this really helps grow awareness of this activity.

“In addition, this competition creates a platform for the second level students of the region to become more aware and involved in a large scale maritime business such as the Port, while at the same time providing them with an opportunity to test their creativity and initiative.”

The finalists will be making a public presentation of their projects at a gala event to be held in the Foynes Flying Boat Museum on 9th February 2014, where the winner will be chosen. This event is open to all contestants, their school colleagues and guardians to attend.

**Ends**

**For Further Information:**

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