



Charities Regulator welcomes prosecution of operator of unregistered charity shop

15 March, 2018

The Charities Regulator welcomes the prosecution today at Belmullet District Court of an individual for operating an unregistered charity shop in breach of the Charities Act 2009.

Ms Maureen Gaughan, Kemar House, Carne, Belmullet, Co. Mayo, pleaded guilty to breaching section 41(1)(b) of the Act for inviting, or causing another person to invite, members of the public to give money or property to a charitable organisation that was not a registered charitable organisation under the Act. The offence took place on 3 December, 2015, in Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

Remanding the case to November, District Court Judge Alan Mitchell said he would give the defendant the benefit of the Probation Act, in lieu of a 12 month prison sentence, if she made a €500 donation to the R.N.L.I. He ordered that the property and money seized by An Garda Síochána be forfeited by the State and given to the Society of St Vincent de Paul for use in the Belmullet area.

“We welcome the cooperation between the Gardai and the Charities Regulator as part of this prosecution,” Charities Regulator chief executive John Farrelly said. “Charity shops are an important source of funding for a number of Irish charities and the work they do, and they depend on the public’s trust and generosity. It is therefore essential that this trust is not undermined by people who are operating shops in breach of the Charities Act. The public must have confidence that goods donated and purchased in charity shops go towards funding charitable work.”

“The Charities Regulator has a zero tolerance approach to shops which present themselves as charities but which are not registered charities,” Mr Farrelly said. “We would encourage the public to check the register of charities on the Charities Regulator’s website before donating to, or supporting, a charity shop.”

If the public have any concerns about a registered Irish charity or any organisation presenting itself as a charity, they should contact the Charities Regulator. Details of the Charities Regulator’s concerns policy and form are available at www.charitiesregulator.ie

For more information: email press@charitiesregulator.ie or contact Eamon Timmins, Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, at 01-6331517 or 087-7520978.

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