

# Bray People

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1991.

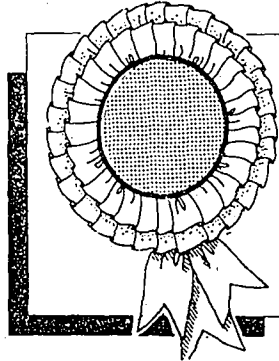
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Dolan  
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# Horizon's vital

## vote

SHAREHOLDERS in Bray's Horizon Radio are this weekend facing a crunch decision crucial to the future of the station, writes Jan Van Embden.

At an extraordinary general meeting called for Monday evening next, shareholders will be asked to vote through major changes in the station's co-operative structure which will allow large scale commercial investment into Horizon for the first time.

This change in policy has been prompted by mounting financial difficulties which have dogged the station from the day it was first launched with a licence from the Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC) less than two years ago.

Under the existing co-operative structure at Horizon, no business has been allowed to buy a shareholding of more than \$6,000.

### INVESTMENT

But now the station's board are asking the e.g.m. to approve changes in the rules which would clear the way for major investment by removing this limit.

Such a move would clearly open up the possibility of a much more commercially oriented broadcasting service at Horizon in contrast to the Community-based philosophy on which it has always prided itself.

Horizon's Station Manager Adrian Kennedy told the Bray People this week that the changes would empower the co-operative to secure the station's future by seeking substantial outside investment to fund future development.

He conceded that like many other new stations set up under the Broadcasting Act two years ago, Horizon was facing financial difficulty although he did not agree that this were major.

'Times have been tough and we are facing stiff competition. The station has been undercapitalised and because of this we have not been able to compete in certain areas as we would want to,' he said.

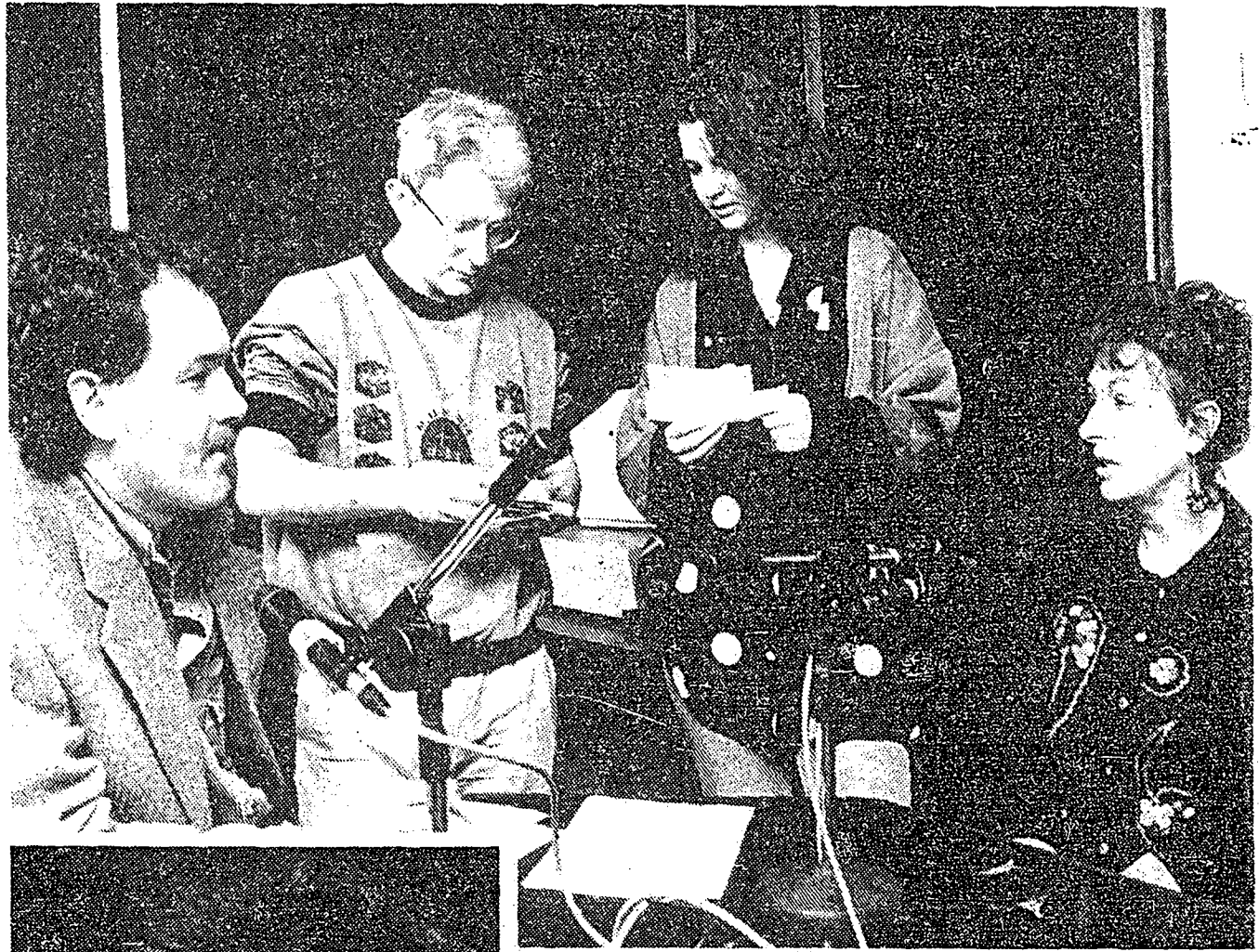
Mr. Kennedy said that although discussions had taken place in recent times with a number of interested parties, no specific investors had yet been lined up. He specifically denied a national newspaper report this week which stated that well known Fianna Fail Senator and show businessman Donie Cassidy was heading up a \$150,000 rescue package.

He confirmed that discussions had taken place with Senator Cassidy about two months ago but that nothing had been agreed. He emphatically dismissed the rescue package claim.

According to Mr. Kennedy a similar change in the rules had recently been successfully implemented at a community station in North Cork.

Responding to suggestions that a major commercial investment could lead to 'wall to wall pop music' programming, Mr. Kennedy said there was no reason that the station could not continue with a major community input with a partially private and a partially co-operative investment structure.

He stressed that the board had no intention of selling out a majority shareholding to private interests, and while he could not foresee what would happen in the future, he anticipated that the successful elements of Horizon's existing pro-



Horizon's Mark Quinn recently brought honour to the station by winning the Bray Endeavour 'Open' Award for his programme 'Quinn and Company'. He's pictured above at work on the programme with Glenros star Geraldine Plunkett, Producer Chris Conway and Researcher Elaine Keogh. ON LEFT...Station Manager Adrian Kennedy.



gramming would remain.

Speaking on the importance of new investment, Mr. Kennedy identified a need for greater promotion of the station as a critical factor in the station's future and this was an element which required funding currently not available.

Mr. Kennedy added his belief that a large part of Horizon's existing programming is very successful and noted the recent success of Horizon presenter Nick Eoghan coming ninth out of 60 in an All-Ireland disc jockey competition, the presentation of a Bray Endeavour Award to chat show host Mark Quinn and improved ratings in recent listenership surveys.

A large attendance is anticipated at next Monday's e.g.m.. When the station was launched with a co-operative structure, large numbers of individual listeners were offered the option of buying shares for as little as \$1 each. Larger shareholdings were taken out by local businesses, statutory bodies and other organisations and associations.

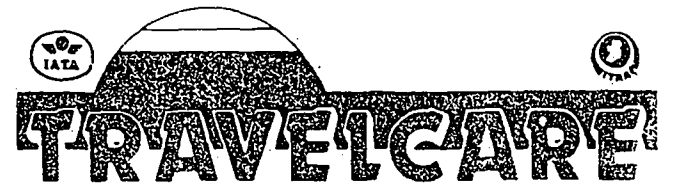
The crucial decision facing the meeting is whether or not the door should be opened to the possible development of Horizon as a commercial radio service, rather than as a community station with strong emphasis on access to the airways by locally based clubs and organisations.

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