

# Green shoots sprout at Macroom-e



**Gerry Gray, Chairman Lee Valley Enterprise Board, Cllr Derry Carty, Mayor of Cork County, Maeve Bowen, Manager Macroom E and Sharon Corcoran, Director of Corporate Services Cork County Council and Chairperson of the Macroom E board pictured at the launch of 'Green Shoots' a new programme for start-up businesses at Macroom E.**

THE only drawback that Bobby Kerr of RTE's Dragon's Den could find with the new entrepreneur programme from Macroom E was that there are only ten places on it.

"There should be 100 or 1,000 places on this," he told the launch of Green Shoots programme at the Castle Hotel Macroom on Monday.

Bobby Kerr of RTE's Dragon's Den proved a big hit with the gathering at the launch. Invited by his old friend and Chairman of the Lee Valley Enterprise Board Gerry Gray, Mr Kerr said he was really encouraged by the new initiative. All seven entrepreneurs in which he had invested were different, he said, but had one thing in common, a will to succeed. "They would climb over barbed wire to make sure that they get where they want to go," he said.

Small is beautiful to this Dragon. "To me the future of employment is about the man with a van who employs three or four people, eventually employing ten people," he said.

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Manufacturing is also central. "We've got to start making things and making things that can be exported that is really where the future lies," he said. Mr Kerr who "doesn't do negativity" said he was very happy to help where he could and never had state funding for any of his businesses.

He also emphasised the importance of providing a stepping stone for people to get off the dole.

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He told the large gathering that he got up early every morning and bounced into work because he loves it!

Minister Batt O'Keeffe spoke for the first time in Macroom in his new capacity as Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation. "All indications are that we are now bottoming out in terms of the recession and that in the latter

part of 2010 we are going to have growth," the Minister said.

Sean O'Sullivan, South Cork Enterprise Board said Macroom E had spawned a lot of initiatives all of which had been positive.

Green Shoots is an incubation programme where ten successful businesses will receive training, mentoring, space and facilities at Macroom E.