

SECTION B (40 marks)

Re-write each of the following two passages as you see fit — reducing both in length to no more than 300 words

1.

'Car Free Days' may become a more regular occurrence in the city in the future if Friday's European initiative is a success as Galway Corporation may consider organising similar days at Christmas and other busy periods.

Galway is one of over 200 cities across Europe participating in Friday's 'Car Free Day' which is intended to encourage car owners to leave their cars at home and to consider alternative modes of transport for the day. An exclusion zone will be set up in the city centre from 9am to 5pm and motorists are being asked not to enter the zone — which includes the already pedestrianised zone — during this period.

Acting City Manager, Martina Maloney told last night's meeting of the City Council that only public service and commercial vehicles, bicycles and motorcycles as well as vehicles driven by the disabled and those with valid residents' permits could enter the area.

While some councillors said the initiative was only paying 'lip service' to the idea of a car free day due to the limited area of the exclusion zone, others suggested that similar initiatives could be used in the future at busy periods such as Christmas.

Alderman Margaret Cox said: "I welcome the park and ride service being offered. We should use the car free day as a test. If we could get some measure of the success of the day, we could look at the possibility of running a pilot scheme at Christmas at key points around the city."

Councillor Micheál O hUiginn said that one of the reasons that many people did not bring bicycles into the city was that there was nowhere safe to leave them and he suggested that more facilities be provided for safe parking.

Councillor John Mulholland questioned why motorbikes should be allowed into the city on Friday as they would cause noise and air pollution.

"The motorbikes will all be in. I can see a right auld hullabaloo in Eyre Square with all the motorbikes going round. It could be a biker's day out. Why should they be allowed in?" he asked.

However, he agreed that the park and ride facility could be a great idea, particularly around Christmas and at night when there was a scarcity of taxis and hackneys.

Senator Fintan Coogan said the initiative would not really affect people working in town and he pointed to other cities that were providing entertainment in the exclusion zones on the day.

A free park and ride service is being provided from the car park beside the Atlantaquaria in Salthill via Merchants Road to Queen Street. This service will operate from 8am to 6pm on Friday at 15 minute intervals.

To encourage bus use, Bus Eireann will operate a half fare on all routes between 9.30am and 4.30pm. City Direct will offer a 50p flat fare for the day and provide a service from the Ballymoneen Road in Knocknacarra every 15 minutes from 7.45am to 10.45pm and 2.45pm to 6.30pm.

A temporary bicycle rack will be available opposite the Skeff in Eyre Square to encourage cyclists and car poolers with three or more people in the car will have free access to the car park at the Sports Ground on College Road.

Galway Energy Agency will be providing demonstrations of an electric bike and car in Eyre Square on Friday and questionnaires by will be given out to members of the public for completion.

2.

A comprehensive document on the need to provide brain surgery facilities in Galway – to serve over 500,000 population along the western seaboard – was handed over to Health Minister Mr. Micheal Martin TD yesterday as part of an ongoing campaign for the provision of such a service in the west.

International research has shown a direct link between the quality of recovery made by patients suffering from major brain trauma, and the distance which the patient has to travel to a major brain surgery unit – the nearest such units to Galway and the west are in Cork and in the Beaumont in Dublin.

At the moment, only the most basic neuro-surgery procedures, such as removal of blood from the skull of patients, or procedures to relieve pressure on the brain, can be carried out at University College Hospital Galway, but patients needing further, or much more sophisticated surgery, must be brought to either Dublin or Cork, and this has led to a demand for the western seaboard to have its own neuro-surgery unit.

The dossier on the need for brain surgery facilities, which is backed-up by international findings on brain trauma patients, was handed to Health Minister Martin and his Cabinet colleague, Marine Minister Mr. Frank Fahey TD, and was compiled for an *ad hoc* committee pressing for the brain surgery facility.

Meanwhile, yesterday Marine Minister Fahey revealed that he had discussions with top civil servants at the Department of Health this week and had proposed to them that they bring forward the process of making appointments to set up a neuro-surgery discipline at UCHG, in preparation for establishment of brain surgery at UCHG.

Minister Fahey said that he would continue to press for the addition of neurosurgery to the present £70million Phase Two of the UCHG development plan.

The demands on the issue of neuro-surgery have been gathering momentum over recent years and have their origins in the wake of the publication of an internationally accepted report which found that access to a neuro-surgery unit and the distance a patient had to travel for treatment, were directly related to the ability of the brain trauma patient to recover.

That survey – which was published by the Irish Medical Journal – was based on a study of over 200 cases of major brain trauma admitted to Beaumont Hospital in Dublin. The study looked at 225 admissions to Beaumont Hospital between July 1992 and June 1993, and detailed records were kept of the condition of all the patients involved.

One of the key findings was the relationship between final functional outcome and the distance of the inter-hospital transfers from outside Dublin. It said: "It suggests that with greater patient referral distances travelled, 'favourable' outcomes (i.e. full recovery or moderate disability) diminish while there is a greater percentage of severely disabled survivors."

The transfer of patients across-country, has, of course, been previously pinpointed as also having its own inherent risks. In a series of recommendations in Britain some years on the question of transfer of patients with acute head injury, a top study group found: "There is now ample evidence that inter-hospital transfer of patients with acute head injuries or other neurosurgical emergencies is potentially hazardous."

Another factor which has intensified the Galway campaign is that, by and large, a very large percentage of patients in need of neuro-surgery may be victims of car smashes and the majority of those seriously injured in car and motorcycle smashes tend to be young people for whom the outlook may be particularly grim if they do not have the best possible chance of recovery through the provision of speedy intervention in areas such as brain surgery.

The findings have also been backed by Professor Patrick J. Kelly, a neuro surgeon and Dean of Medicine at New York University School of Medicine, who has thrown his influence behind the demand for neurosurgery facilities in Galway. Professor Kelly, whose family have strong Galway connections, said that not to have such a facility to serve the western seaboard, was akin to a Third World medical service.

Said Professor Kelly: "Time is of the essence in the neuro-surgical treatment of many brain tumours and traumatic conditions. The institution of timely and appropriate treatment is a life and death matter. Evacuation of a patient from the West coast to the East coast of Ireland may not be in the patient's best interest of the patient in many cases. In some cases the delay could be fatal."

Professor Kelly said that with hundreds of thousands of people from Clare to Donegal being potentially served by a brain injury service in Galway, the concept of delaying provision of neurosurgery in Galway was akin to 'third world medicine.'