

## **JFMR Statement Re Donnybrook Magdalene Laundry**

In this decade of commemorations the destruction of Magdalene Institutions continues – in the first weeks of 2016 the Magdalene in New Ross was demolished, and now it appears the site in Donnybrook is to make way for development. The destruction continues in spite of Judge John Quirke recommending that the Government's Magdalen Ex Gratia Scheme Redress Scheme include commemoration of our painful history. There has been no movement on this aspect of the Scheme to date. The destruction continues despite the fact that over half of the €58 million fund allocated to Magdalene Scheme is still available: funds which might be put forward to carry out an 'independent and thorough investigation' as called for by the Irish Human Rights Commission and the UN so that we might properly record the history – and ensure that the former Magdalene women who lie in unmarked graves get a decent burial.

Justice for Magdalenes Research (JFMR) has been working to ensure that the history of these institutions is properly recorded. We have gathered an archive of over 4,000 pages relating to the Magdalene Institutions – this has been scanned and will be available on-line shortly. We have collected oral histories with over 90 people (survivors, relatives and others associated with the Magdalenes) – these are being processed and are being put on-line. We have been gathering material for a 'virtual digital museum' where images, audio, transcripts and archive can be put on-line for people to learn from and donate to. Through the Magdalene Names Project, JFMR has also been working on collating a complete list of names of women who died within the Magdalene walls from a variety of archival sources (as we do not have access to the records that the nuns hold) and we are working to commemorate the women with appropriate headstones. We have been involved for the past five years in co-organising the commemoration of the women buried at Magdalene grave sites around the country associated (always on the Sunday closest to International Women's Day) – we would encourage people to find their local Flowers for Magdalenes event next Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March to pay respect to the women who were given no respect while alive. The event details are available at this link: [http://magdalenelaundries.com/JFMR%20PR\\_01-03-16.pdf](http://magdalenelaundries.com/JFMR%20PR_01-03-16.pdf)

The Department of Justice has been the point of contact for survivors in administering the Redress Scheme, which falls significantly short of what was outlined by Justice Quirke. We believe the Department should establish whether the Religious Order involved has any financial stake in the existing sites in Donnybrook and if the graveyards and some of the buildings on the Donnybrook site are listed for preservation.

Finally, there is one almost entirely intact Magdalene Institution in the hands of Dublin City Council on Sean McDermott Street and JFMR suggests that artefacts that can be salvaged and recorded from the Donnybrook site might find a place there.