**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Milford Care Centre’s Annual Harvest Fair impacted for a second year by COVID-19**

The Annual Milford Care Centre’s Harvest Fair has, like so many other public events, fallen victim yet again to the restrictions of the prolonged pandemic. Forced to cancel last year’s Harvest Fair the first time in its 35-year history, plans to hold the 2021 Fair have been put on ice.

Making the announcement, Milford Care Centre’s Chief Executive Officer, Mary O’Brien: “Whilst is it very disappointing to have to miss out on our annual Harvest Fair for the second year in a row, we are guided by Government guidelines and it would be impossible to host an event of this nature. The protection of human health is at the heart of everything we do, so we could not contemplate putting at risk the lives, or health, of those who have supported us so generously by organising the Fair.

“The Harvest Fair has evolved down through the years and has grown from strength to strength, thanks to the wonderful work of the organising Committee, led by Joe Murphy, and the large team of committed volunteers that work tirelessly to prepare for and run this day-long Fair. Similarly, this event has always been so well supported by communities across the Mid-West and has been firmly enshrined into the calendar of annual significant fundraising events in the Mid-West so whilst people may not be surprised to learn that we are not holding it this year, they are likely to be disappointed.”

Encouraging all fans of the Harvest Fair throughout the Mid-West region to continue supporting Milford Care Centre, Ms O’Brien added: “Fundraising is a very important element of our work as all the monies raised go towards the provision of much-needed specialist palliative care services that we provide across Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary.

 “Our fundraising department, led by Anne Marie Hayes, is working behind the scenes to find innovative solutions to replace the funding we normally secure through live events.

 “COVID-19 has been very challenging from a service delivery perspective but nonetheless, we remain committed to continuing to provide the best care that we can to support patients and their families at a most difficult time in their lives, because they deserve no less. The ongoing generous support we receive from the people of the Mid-West is essential to help us do what we do each day; we don’t take this for granted and we are extremely grateful for same.

“As with all charities that are finding these times very challenging, we would encourage the public to support our work in whatever way they can, perhaps by doing some form of fun-filled collaborative virtual activity to replace the purchasing they might have done at the Harvest Fair.  We can only look forward to brighter days ahead and a bumper Harvest Fair, hopefully in 2022,” added Ms O’Brien.

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