

## Ecars in Tipperary

For those of you have noticed, there have been 2 electric cars driving around Tipperary. The Mitsubishi i-MiEV has been driven by Mrs Olivia O'Brien who is the ESB ecars electric car ambassador for the Tipperary Area. Olivia is a second level teacher in the Presentation Convent in Thurles.



Pictured: Vincent Carragher (TEA) & Olivia O'Brien

Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA) met Olivia in the LIT Thurles car park on 25<sup>th</sup> September after school and test drove Olivia's i-MiEV car. It was smooth and extremely zippy and Olivia now prefers driving it to her Ford Focus 1.4L Petrol. She finds that the i-MiEV is hard to beat. The car is automatic and she told us that 'take off is surreal' and compared driving it to gliding or free wheeling down a hill on a bike. She was surprised by its acceleration power and its ability to do a speed of 100 – 120 km per hour. The car has turned heads in Thurles and has been a big attraction with her fellow teachers and pupils. She has been met with lots of questions and requests for a spin from neighbours, friends and work colleagues and all have been very impressed including a local car dealer. She is hoping that charge point app (available on the ESB ecar website) will be very handy in navigating her way around the country as her i-MiEV model (2010) does not have a satellite navigation system unlike the currently released electric cars in Ireland.

For the past 3 weeks, TEA have been test driving the fully electric Renault Fluence ZE as part of the Clean Drive project ([www.clean-drive.eu](http://www.clean-drive.eu)) which has been provided by Patrick Cleary from Cleary Motors in Thurles. This car has truly gotten around Tipperary. It has been in Cahir, Thurles, Holycross, Kilcommon, Clonmel, Nenagh, Cloughjordan, Ballina and Waterford. It has also made an appearance in Boston Scientific in Clonmel, with the seed Savers in Scarriff and in Waterford Institute of Technology.

The acceleration and power are something to be admired. Many people who have seen the car were impressed that it is really just a normal car with the exception of how it is powered. The Fluence can do close to 135km on a full charge and its regenerative braking gives you power back while you drive. With its cruise control and speed limiter, you can be safe knowing that you are using your charge most efficiently and won't get a speeding ticket. It's a really comfortable and inexpensive drive and we have estimated that for the ten euro you normally spend on petrol or diesel this car puts 9 euro back in

your pocket for the same distance. The preconditioned function is a real treat making sure that its nice and warm inside on those cold days before you get into the car without reducing your range. The Renault Fluence ZE really is suitable as the main family car.



Pictured: Noel Gleeson (TEA)