

Milltown's good luck party for Rio-bound Paralympian Deirdre

By Jacqueline Hogge

MILLTOWN is rolling out the red carpet for local athlete Deirdre Mongan with a good luck party ahead of next month's Paralympic Games in Rio.

Deirdre, who is originally from Cloondroon but is now living in Co Down, will be among the Irish Paralympic team travelling to Brazil, where she will compete in the shot put F53 Class event.

The mother of one has already won bronze medals in both the World and European Championships and this is her first Olympic games.

"I don't really know what to expect so I'm going to try to enjoy it and not get too overwhelmed but take it all in at

the same time," Deirdre told the Tuam Herald this week.

Her husband Steve and father Stephen will travel to Brazil to cheer her on along with her sister and mother-in-law, but two-year-old Amy will remain in Milltown, cared for by Deirdre's mother Mary. "The family will be over for about eight days, but I'll be there three weeks. That's going to be hard being away from Amy but I'm trying not to think about it," she added.

Ranked fourth in the world, the chances of a podium finish for Deirdre are strong, but she says the competition will come down to whoever is strongest on the day.

"I got the bronze medal in the European championships in June which was really a warm up event for Rio but I

will need to throw better to have a chance of winning a medal," she said.

"There isn't that much separating the top athletes in my event so it will all come down to how I perform on the day."

Before she departs however, there's a party to send her on her way which has been organised by friends and neighbours in Milltown.

Sheridan's will host the event on Saturday evening, where local musicians will perform as friends and family gather to wish Deirdre well.

"My dad was on to me telling me to be home this weekend so I'm down Friday evening and back up Sunday as there's still a lot to do before I fly out with the team," added Deirdre.

"I'm really looking forward to catching up with family and friends as I don't get home as often as I'd like, so this is lovely chance to meet up with everyone.

"I'm delighted to have this party thrown in my honour, and it's a very nice gesture by those who have organised it."

Mary Hernon, who has organised the night, said it was a way for the local community to show its support for her and all the hard work that has gone into qualifying for the Games.

"Deirdre has been a huge supporter of Milltown Ladies Football down through the years and her sister Ann Marie who is on the team so this is a way for us to show our support for her as she heads over



MILLTOWN native Deirdre Mongan will represent Ireland in the shot putt, at next month's Paralympic Games in Rio. She will also be the guest of honour at a good luck party being thrown in her honour in Milltown on Saturday night.

to Rio," she said.

"The Mongan family are hugely respected throughout Milltown and beyond and we

are hoping for a big turnout on Saturday night where people can chat over a cup of tea and wish Deirdre well."