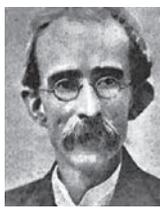




PATRICK PEARSE



THOMAS McDONAGH



THOMAS CLARKE



JOSEPH PLUNKETT



ÉAMONN CEANNT



JAMES CONNOLLY



SEÁN Mac DIARMADA



NUACHT NA HAONTACHTA

APRIL AIBREÁN 2022

UNITY



NEWS

Limited number of Irish Unity Easter Eggs available

These unique Easter Eggs for 2022 are handmade in the beautiful Contae Chiarraí and only a limited quantity are available.

Get them from An Fhuiseog & the Sinn Féin bookshop in Dublin.
<https://www.thelarkstore.ie/pro.../time-for-unity-easter-egg>
<https://www.sinnfeinbookshop.com/time-for-unity-easter-egg/>



Éirí amach na Cásca



TOWARD THE NEW IRELAND

This month Irish republicans across Ireland and globally will commemorate and celebrate the men and women who rose in rebellion against the British at Easter time 1916. We will also remember all those from earlier and later phases of struggle.

The Easter Rising and the Proclamation of the Republic lit a flame for freedom in the 20th century that later saw many British colonies join the fight for and win their freedom.

Women and men from the four corners of Ireland – nationalists, republicans, socialists, trade unionists, gaelgeoirí, feminists – came together and took on the foremost super-power of that time.

They envisaged a Republic, where people are citizens, not subjects; where people have fundamental rights;

where there is equality, not elitism; where there is unity, not division.

The British state imposed partition on our island. It has never served Irish national interests or the public good. It has ensured that the island of Ireland has not reached our full economic, social or political potential.

The peace process and the Good Friday Agreement have created new opportunities. Brexit too has encouraged citizens to look beyond old certainties. The objective of Irish Unity has advanced as more and more citizens see it as the best outcome for the future.

The Assembly election provides an opportunity to make further advances. As Uachtarán Mary Lou

McDonald said at the election launch in Belfast: "The political landscape is being transformed by a generation hungry for change."

It's up to this generation of republicans to unlock this potential. We can't do it on our own but we can achieve it through working with others.

There is now a peaceful way to end the union with Britain. That the referendum provided for in the Good Friday Agreement.

Sinn Féin is campaigning for that referendum and for it to be preceded by a process of planning and discussion in a Citizens' Assembly.

The onus is on the Irish government to organise this and to give people their say about the type of new Ireland that is possible.



Time for real change
Am don athrú cheart



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

CALLS GROW FOR CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

The recent St Patrick's Day global focus on Irish issues provided the opportunity for a number of leading Irish American organisations including the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Brehon Law Societies, the James Connolly Labour Coalition and Friends of Sinn Féin USA and FoSF in Canada to indicate their support for the establishment of an all island Citizens' Assembly on Irish Unity.

The groups placed adverts in 9 American newspapers including the New York Times and the Washington Post supporting the demand made by Sinn Féin leaders Mary Lou McDonald and Michelle O'Neill calling on the Irish Government to convene the Citizens' Assembly.

More locally support for the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly was indicated by Alliance Party leader Naomi Long in an interview in the Irish News at the beginning of March. The Alliance leader called on the British Government to set out the criteria for the holding of a referendum and also said:

"I think that unionism should engage with the conversation when it comes to what a new Ireland might look like and have their voice heard, and have their reservations, their concerns, their fears, the reasons why they

don't support it - to have those heard and respected. I think that's really important."

The Citizens' Assembly on Irish Unity will put the people at the very heart of the democratic process towards building the new Ireland.

Citizens' assemblies have been held previously in the 26 counties on issues like marriage equality, termination of pregnancy and gender equality. There was a citizens' assembly in the north in 2018 to consider the issue of social care for older people and France and Belgium have used this format as well. In Britain a number of local councils have established citizens' assemblies to consider issues pertinent to the work of the council and the London Borough of Newham has set up a permanent citizens' assembly, demonstrating long term commitment to participative democracy.

The future of our island is being discussed more widely than ever. There is an onus on the Government to establish a formal, structured mechanism to ensure the correct planning is undertaken ahead of the referendum on Irish unity. A Citizens' Assembly is an essential part of this.



'IRISH UNITY - NOT A QUESTION OF IF, BUT WHEN'

Sinn Féin MEP Chris MacManus recently addressed a major conference on self-determination held in Donostia/San Sebastian in the Basque Country. The conference was organised by the European parliamentary groups GUE/ENGL (The Left in the European Parliament) and RE (Renew Europe).

The conference, which entitled: "The European Union in the face of sovereignty conflicts: towards a framework of clarity", was also addressed by prominent self-determination activists from Catalonia, Corsica and the Basque Country.

The main focus of the conference was to discuss a document that its advocates believe could form the basis of a "debate within the European institutions on the need to provide a democratic response to territorial sovereignty conflicts and where appropriate to serve as an initial documents for the development of various legal instruments or proposals (code of practice, resolutions etc) that contribute to their democratic solution."

The document is the result of a collaborative process in which more than 80 internationally recognised experts in the field took part. It argues for resolutions that are "framed and promoted with full respect for democratic principles, the rule of law and human and collective rights: in coherence with the dominant values of the 21st century." In his contribution Chris MacManus highlighted how the conversation around Irish unity has gained momentum in recent years and spoke of the obvious importance of adequate preparation and planning as a part of a wider informed debate.

He told his audience: "I believe it is now clear that it is not a question of if, but a question of when a referendum on Irish reunification will be held. Therefore, discussions like this are crucial for the preparation and planning of a measured and informed debate on Irish Unity. Such discussions show why we need to immediately establish a Citizens' Assembly to examine constitutional change on the island of Ireland. It can play a key and positive role in discussing all of the issues and mapping a way forward.

Any outcome should articulate how Irish unity will ensure that all traditions on our island are treated with respect. A vision of a real republic with equality at its core. We do not want a campaign of chaos, confusion and lies like the one experienced in the Brexit referendum."

The Sinn Féin MEP said that the EU has been hugely supportive of the peace process and of the Good Friday Agreement. In the Brexit negotiations the defence of the GFA was a key objective. MacManus argued that the European Union must "take this engagement to its logical conclusion by engaging with political representatives, civil society and others concerned to know what supports would be available to ensure a smooth transition from partition to Unity."

TIME FOR UNITY CONFERENCE

Sinn Féin TD for Cavan-Monaghan and Party Spokesperson on Agriculture Matt Carthy is hosting conference on Irish Unity next Saturday, 8th April in the Garage Theatre, Monaghan.

The conference will commence at 11am sharp with an opening address by Sinn Féin Vice-President Michelle O'Neill MLA. There will be a panel discussion chaired by Aishling Kearnan, from Northern Sound Radio. Participants will include Colin Harvey, Patricia McBride and Alex Kane.

There will also be a sketch presentation from comedian Tadgh Hickey. The event will conclude at 2pm following a closing address by Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald.

In order to secure your place at the conference you can pre-register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/time-for-irish-unity-tickets-269120325137>

Conference / Comhdháil

Time for Irish Unity?

Saturday
9th April 2022
11am-2pm
Garage Theatre,
Monaghan.

TOWARDS A UNITED IRELAND

Organised by Matt Carthy TD
www.sinnfein.ie



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

PLANTING Crann na Saoirse

Despite an increasing focus on the work of fighting the 5 May Assembly election many local areas are still planting their Crann na Saoirse trees. Gerry Adams has been to some of these.

Easter is now only two weeks away. Planting a Crann na Saoirse in memory of those who fought and died for Irish freedom is a timely and symbolic gesture. It is also a reminder that the struggle for a united Ireland, independence and freedom continues.



Crossmaglen



Sion Mills



Kilcoo



Hilltown

EU Commissioner told Irish Unity is way forward



Louth TD Ruairí Ó Murchú is a member of the Oireachtas EU Affairs Committee. He recently attended a Conference on the Future of Europe in Strasbourg which was focussed on the issues of cyber and hybrid security.

The Louth TD used the opportunity to raise the issue of the Nationalities and Borders legislation passed by the British Parliament.

This is a direct attack on the Good Friday Agreement through the introduction of an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA). Speaking to the conference chairperson Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič the Louth TD pointed out that under the British government's new law 'almost everyone' at the conference would need an ETA to travel from the South of Ireland into the North.

Teachta Ó Murchú said that this retrograde new measure by a right wing British government 'highlights the ongoing madness of Brexit. The only sensible solution to all of this is Irish unity'.

#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

A new and united Ireland is within reach

The 'genie is out of the bottle' when it comes to Irish unity, an event hosted by Ireland's Future in the Crowne Plaza in Dundalk was told.

The event, which was organised by the civic group Ireland's Future, featured a number of speakers, including Louth Sinn Féin TD Ruairí Ó Murchú who called for a date to be set for a unity referendum.

Deputy Ó Murchú said it was 'imperative' that preparations get underway for Irish unity, as the 'genie is out of the bottle' and the conversations are already underway.

He said people in Louth knew that "partition has not been good for anyone" and "you only

have to look at the Westminster vote (on border checks for EU citizens) to see that any bad situation can always be made worse by the British government".

Teachta Ó Murchú said: "Preparations are absolutely necessary. Even among political parties in Leinster House, there is a conversation happening about getting the show on the road. There are different views about how it should be done. Sinn Féin is seeking a Citizens' Assembly.

Brexit has, he said, helped to push Irish unity up the agenda. It has "introduced a level of steroids to the mix. We need to set a date for the referendum."



IRELAND'S FUTURE IN THE USA

March saw Ireland's Future hold three public events on the theme of Preparing for a United Ireland. Two of the events were held in the USA - a first for the group. Philadelphia took place on 12 March and the New York conference was on 14 March. A third conference took place in Dundalk on 24 March.



The two US conferences were well attended and covered in the Irish America media. The Philadelphia conference included Congressman Brendan Boyle; Maria Walsh MEP; Niall Murphy and Seanadóir Frances Black. In New York Frances was joined by Mairead Farrell TD; Niall Murphy and Susan McKay. Mairead Farrell said: "The conversation on Irish Unity has progressed. We now need a structured,

formal mechanism to plan for constitutional change. The Irish government has a duty and a constitutional obligation to make preparations for Unity. A National Citizens' Assembly, with Irish government support and resource, will enable political, civic and cultural entities to become involved in the process of change. It puts citizens at the heart of shaping the new Ireland and it democratizes the process."

Gerry Carlile who is CEO of Ireland's Future said: "The debate on a united Ireland is gaining unprecedented momentum. New initiatives and projects are appearing regularly, and much detailed work has already been completed. People are not waiting around for governments; they are getting on it. As an organization Ireland's Future is dedicated to achieving

constitutional change, this is heartening to watch. No one needs permission to join this conversation, and all continue to be warmly welcome."

Gerry Carlile added: "We in Ireland's Future are motivated by a shared responsibility to promote dialogue, and we are intensifying our efforts and preparations. Our all-Ireland public meetings demonstrate the enormous appetite for engagement. We have been listening and reflecting on what we have heard at these events. We are a peaceful, democratic, civic movement for constitutional change. We invite everyone - near and far - to join us in this work. Our agenda is anchored in the Good Friday Agreement, and everything we do is framed by its values, principles and obligations. The people of Ireland have a right to determine their own constitutional future and we believe they should be given that democratic choice. It would be bizarre in the current circumstances if this option was not being discussed and actively planned for."



#Time4Unity **Am d'Aontacht**

Sinn Féin at No Pasarán! conference of European Left

The European Left party, in association with the German Left party, Die Linke, and think tank Transform! Europe held their third iteration of the ¡No pasarán! conference in Berlin two weeks. The theme of the conference was stopping the far right and building the alternative. The conference draws together activists and experts from across Europe and beyond to strategise and plan about how best to challenge the growth of the far right. It was an opportunity to share experiences and analysis on how best to mobilise. The reality is that in the last decade the far right has grown in influence and strength. The far right takes many forms but it is a direct threat to democratic institutions and the rights of citizens. It exploits Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, xenophobia sectarianism and racism to spread hate and fear. They attack the rights and liberties of every citizen and it has especially targeted the rights of women. Sinn Féin was represented at the conference by Leas Ard Runaí, Dáire Hughes who told the gathering a United Ireland with its vision of inclusiveness, respect and equality provides an effective alternative to those advocating far right policies.

Speaking at the event Dáire said; "The title of this event - ¡No Pasarán! - invokes an emotive response from Irish republicans, as it should for progressives and anti-fascists the world over. Our party is particularly proud of the response made by Irish republicans to the cries for help from the fledgling Spanish Republic in the mid-1930s. "The looming spectre of the far-right, of fascism, of populist conservatism, stalks Europe to this day. Whilst the far-right in Ireland doesn't possess a significant electoral footprint, there are issues on which they can bring influence to bear and we have to keep our guard up. "The creation, promotion and delivery of credible, effective policy is the best long-term solution to counter the threat of the far-right. Policy based on standing up for workers and families, addressing real and immediate need, communicated in direct and unambiguous terms. "Grassroots campaigning and legislative action on workers' rights, housing, community safety, calling out corruption in government, defending the rights of people moving to our countries, socio-economic rights and ensuring the cost of the environmental crisis isn't heaped on the poorest in society, amongst other issues, is crucial. "Crucial too, in challenging the far-right of what it needs, is the promotion of a vision for a better future. In our case, the vision of a new and united Ireland, based on the principle of equality, in which the full potential of our people can be unleashed."



Seachtain na Gaeilge

Seachtain na Gaeilge is the biggest celebration of Irish language and culture in the world. The festival used to run for one week but became so popular it was extended. It now runs annually from 1 March to 17 March – St. Patrick's Day.

Two years ago before Covid there were over 30,000 events held in Ireland and across the world with an estimated three quarters of a million people participating. Seachtain na Gaeilge embraces language, music, dance and sport, and increasingly events on social media. Writers too have brought a focus to the language.

Is í Seachtain na Gaeilge an ceiliúradh is mó den Ghaeilge agus Cultúr na hÉireann ar domhan. Bhí an oiread sin ráchairt uirthi gur síneadh amach chuid coicís í. Bíonn sí ar siúl ó 1 Márta go dtí 17 Márta - Lá Fhéile Pádraig, achan bhliain.

Bhí 30,000 imeacht ann ar fud na hÉireann agus an domhain roimh Covid agus measadh gur ghlac trí cheathrú milliún duine páirt iontu.

Tá an teangaigh, ceol, damhsa agus spóirt mar chuid de Sheachtain na Gaeilge, agus níos mó imeachtaí ná riamh ar na meáin shóisialta anois. Tá aird dírithe ag scríbhneoirí ar an teangaigh anois.

The Uniting Ireland committee of the party organised several initiatives tying in the Irish Unity theme to the Seachtain na Gaeilge events. Elected representatives were encouraged to raise the Unity issue as Gaeilge during speeches within the various institutions, and our digital media team helped to produce social media graphics.

We also encouraged activists to post videos on social media to promote the campaign. An online Dianchúrsa Gaeilge was organised, which provided activists with the opportunity to learn some of the key words and phrases from our campaign as gaeilge. Go raibh maith agat to Múinteoir Cónall for teaching the class.

UNITED IRELAND KEY WORDS
FRÁSÁÍ ÉIRE AONTAITHE

32 contae
32 counties

Éire Nua
A New Ireland

Éire
Ireland

Tacaím le hAontacht na hÉireann
I support Irish Unity

Tá an t-am linn planáil faoi choinne athraithe
It's time to plan for change

Féinchinntiúchán Náisiúnta
National Self Determination

Tá sé in am d'Aontacht na hÉireann
It's time for Irish unity

SNAG22

The momentum for constitutional change on this island has never been stronger. Discussion is taking place everywhere. This conversation is also be happening as Gaeilge.



St. Patrick's Day in the USA

BY CIARAN QUINN

There was a warm and welcoming response in Irish-America and on Capitol Hill in Washington to the visit by Uachtarán Mary Lou McDonald, Leas Uachtarán Michelle O'Neill and Conor Murphy to the USA for the St. Patrick's Day events. The visit took place against the backdrop of the invasion of Ukraine and the return of conflict to Europe. Ireland and our peace process remain a symbol of hope. The right to self-determination was central to conversations on Ukraine and Ireland. Irish Unity, managing the change that is unfolding and sustaining peace, progress, and the Good Friday Agreement was front and centre in all the conversations. In New York, the Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald took part in a Question and Answer session at the prestigious Council for Foreign Policy. The event was chaired by Amy Davison-Sorkin of the New Yorker Magazine. The discussion is available here to view. Later that day both Mary Lou McDonald and Michelle O'Neill took part in a discussion at Fordham University with Prof Martin Flaherty entitled, "Irish Unity in Our Time?". Given Covid restrictions, this was a hybrid event with contributions from the floor and online. Over an hour was spent discussing the possibility and potential of Unity. Between these events, the Sinn Féin leaders met with the New York Irish Centre and Emerald Isle Immigration Centre. Sinn Féin was represented

at an Ireland's Future Event by Mairead Farrell TD. While Irish Unity was being discussed at in-person and online events it was also prominent across US News Papers. Six leading Irish America Organisations signed on to an open letter calling on An Taoiseach Micheál Martin to convene a Citizens' Assembly to plan and promote Irish Unity. The ads were placed in the New York Times, Washington Post, LA Times, Sacramento Bee, and San Jose Mercury News as well as in Irish American Publicans. The Sinn Féin President and Vice President travelled to Washington for a series of meetings with the US Administration officials, Irish Community leaders, and members of Congress. Conor Murphy, the Sinn Féin Minister for Finance was also in Washington representing the Executive. On Capitol Hill, the Sinn Féin delegation met with the Congressional Friends of Ireland chaired by Rep. Richard Neal and Rep. Mike Kelly and met with Senators Chris Murphy and Paul Van Hollen. The following day the leaders would meet with Rep. Gregory Meeks, Chair of the Congressional Foreign Affairs Committee. On St. Patrick's Day, Congress unanimously passed Resolution 888 introduced by Rep.

Keating and Rep. Fitzpatrick and co-signed by 48 Congressional leaders. The resolution called for justice for the Bloody Sunday families, opposed the British Governments proposals to end judicial investigations and grant an unconditional amnesty and called for the protection and implementation of the protocol and Good Friday Agreement. The US is fully engaged and informed on political developments in Ireland. They stand by the agreements, the primacy of politics, and the democratic foundation of progress. The discussions involving the Sinn Féin leaders dealt with the political challenges of today and with planning for the future. Everyone we met was on the side of the agreements and the principle of democratic change. Irish Unity was not only the preserve of political leaders, Mairead Farrell TD and Senator Niall O'Donoghue both spoke at the James Connolly Labor Coalition Breakfast before marching with the group at the New York St. Patrick's Day Parade. On the West Coast, Irish Unity was the theme of the San Francisco Centre Patrick's Day Parade. Irish Unity flags were carried in the Ventura Parade. The conversation on Irish Unity is advancing in the US.



Time 4 Unity Am d'Aontacht



Irish heart, London postcode

BY JOE O'DWYER

As Percy French wrote in *Mountains of Mourne*, "oh Mary, this London's a wonderful sight..." And never was that sentiment truer than during the run-up to St Patrick's Day – a day when the streets of London turn into steady currents of green as the London-Irish turn out in full force. After a two-year hiatus, it was great to be once more stomping the tarmac for the annual St Patrick's Day parade and festival on Sunday 13 March. This year the Grand Marshalls of the parade were key workers, from across London, who had performed vital roles during the pandemic. From nurses, to supermarket workers, to teachers, to community champions. They led the parade.

The Sinn Féin delegation included the political representatives Francie Molloy, MP for Mid Ulster, and Maurice Quinlivan, TD for Limerick City.

Francie and Maurice would be familiar faces for the Irish in London. As one of seven Sinn Féin MPs, Francie is a regular traveller to the city and over the years has worked closely with many of the Irish community groups in London. Maurice Quinlivan lived in London for nine years, before returning to Ireland in 1999, and would have been active in the London-based Wolf Tone Society and the prisoner support networks

Saoirse and later Fuscaillt.

For the London-Irish, the parade itself - from Piccadilly to Trafalgar Square - still carries important symbolism and weight for the community. From 1972 onwards, there was a blanket ban introduced to prevent any gatherings relating to Ireland from entering Trafalgar Square.

Accordingly, the return of St Patrick's Day celebrations to the square thirty years later, on 17 March 2002, marked a new chapter for the Irish experience in Britain. The then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, had made it a pre-election pledge to host a London St. Patrick's Parade to rival the grand parades of New York or Chicago. And this was achieved.

Sinn Féin has always been happy to support the parade organisers and has always had a visible presence along the route. It was good to be able to do so again.

The rest of the week saw similar opportunities for diaspora outreach as the St Patrick's celebrations and festivities continued.

The following day, Monday 14 March, John Finucane MP attended the Labour Party Irish Society's St Patrick's Reception. This informal social reception provided an excellent opportunity to celebrate the strength of the Irish community in both local government in London and within the British Labour Party.

The North Belfast MP addressed the reception and called for a collective redoubling of efforts against this current British Government's assault on the Good Friday Agreement. He also thanked the Labour Party Irish Society directly for its vocal support for his family's campaign to uncover the truth of British state collusion in the murder of his father Pat Finucane.

Francie Molloy MP took part in the CHAMP St Patrick's Day Reception in Westminster and the Irish Embassy's Reception that same evening. Ultimately, the week represented a vibrant, diverse, and positive celebration and expression of all things Irish. The very best of London-Irish community, pride, and culture was on display. At each and every engagement, Sinn Féin representatives were met with a warm London-Irish welcome. The future prospects for both the party and the wider push towards a united Ireland was a topic of considerable conversation. The potential role for the diaspora in that conversation and the possibility of utilising the strength of the Irish in Britain to support of such a campaign was of considerable interest. Many are fed up with the annual lip-service and platitudes from Dublin government Ministers. There is a growing appetite within the diaspora for change and for a genuine opportunity to play a meaningful role in the building of a new Ireland.

Nationality and Borders Bill

March saw the British Parliament once again breach the letter and spirit of the Good Friday Agreement through the introduction of new Nationality and Borders legislation. Effectively the British have introduced a US style visa waiver system for people who wish to travel into the North from the South. The vote in the British House of Commons overturned an amendment in the Lords which would have exempted the six counties from the legislation. It means that EU citizens, who are not Irish, and citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) or non-Irish citizens from other countries who did not previously require a visa, will now need an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).

The millions of tourists who travel into Dublin and other airports and ports in the South each year will now have to apply for an ETA if they wish to travel north. In addition the thousands of non Irish EU and other citizens who live and work in the 26 counties will need an ETA, even to cross the border to shop or visit friends and relatives.

The British decision was widely condemned. Human rights groups warned that the legislation was unworkable and raised again the spectre of a hard border on the island of Ireland.

The Irish government described the decision as "regrettable." Simon Coveney Minister for Foreign Affairs admitted that when they raised their concerns

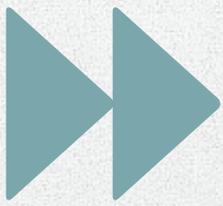
with the British they were ignored.

Seanadóir Niall O'Donnghaile speaking in the Seanad said he found the "intent behind the Nationality and Borders Bill quite repugnant." He pointed out that: "Tourism Ireland, an all-island body established by the Good Friday Agreement, works hard internationally to promote the island of Ireland as a tourism destination. This legislation means that visitors travelling into the South and who wish to visit the iconic Giant's Causeway, or to visit Derry or to see Titanic Belfast will have to apply for an ETA. This is a breach of the letter and spirit of the GFA."

Seanadóir O'Donnghaile also pointed out that over St. Patrick's Day an invitation was extended to the US President, Joe Biden to visit Ireland. President Biden is very proud of his Irish heritage. If he leads a delegation here including Congressman Richard Neal and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, all of whom have been steadfast in defence of the Good Friday Agreement they will now have to apply for an ETA."

Concluding Niall O'Donnghaile said: "This month is the 24 birthday of the Good Friday Agreement. There is an onus on the Irish government to defend the Agreement and to challenge the British government on this decision. This legislation cannot be allowed to stand. It must be vigorously opposed."

#Time4Unity **Am d'Aontacht**



New Council Working Group on Irish Unity established

This month Newry Mourne and Down Council passed a motion to establish a Working Group on Irish Unity. The motion to establish a working group to consult on uniting the island was brought forward by Cllr Barra Ó Muirí (SF). The Slieve Gullion representative encouraged NMDDC to join fellow councils in Derry and Strabane and Belfast to initiate a process of dialogue and conversation on the reunification of the island.

Cllr Ó Muirí said: "The type of Ireland we envision for the future needs to be spelt out, it should be a new Ireland for everybody, no ideology should be diminished. Unionists have nothing to fear from talking. Any decisions will be arrived at democratically."

The decision by NMDDC adds to Derry and Strabane District Council, Mid Ulster and Donegal County Council and Belfast who already have groups established. Fermanagh and Omagh are also preparing to bring forward a motion in the near future.

In addition, Dublin City Council passed an important motion unanimously in favour of holding the unity referendum provided for in the Good Friday Agreement. The Council also supported the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly to discuss the many issues of importance relating to progress on Irish Unity.

The motion was proposed by Sinn Féin Councillor Daniel Céitinn and received cross-party support. Speaking afterward Councillor Céitinn said: "Tonight's vote reflects the growing public support for an Irish Unity referendum. The debate on what type of United Ireland we should build is live, especially among young people across this island. Dublin City Council's vote puts our capital to the fore in the debate on the new Ireland, including transformed health, education and other social services, and a vibrant all-Ireland economy. Equality must be central to this vision. All Councillors who spoke agreed on the need for a Citizens Assembly to prepare for Unity. The Irish government should now proceed on this."

The Council Motion stated:
That Dublin City Council notes the centenary of the passage of the Government of Ireland



Act by the British Parliament at Westminster in December 1920, the Act which provided for the partition of Ireland.

- ▶▶ Recalls the deep injustices, divisions and conflict caused by this Act.
- ▶▶ Reiterates its support for the good Friday Agreement and the political process arising from it, including the revocation of the Government of Ireland Act.
- ▶▶ Reaffirms its support for self determination of the people of Ireland as expressed in Article 3.1 of Bunreacht na hEireann, and for the bringing about of a united Ireland 'by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed in both Jurisdictions'.
- ▶▶ Calls on the Irish and British Governments to fully implement the Good Friday Agreement and honour all their obligations with regards to the rights of citizens,
- ▶▶ Further calls on the British Government, in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement, to agree to set a date for referendum on Irish unity as provided for in the Agreement, and for the Irish Government to work towards this outcome.

Newry Mourne and Down District Council to form working group on Irish Unity

“Irish Unity is no longer an abstract concept but is now central to the debate throughout political life and within civic society.
”

Cllr BARRA Ó MUIRÍ



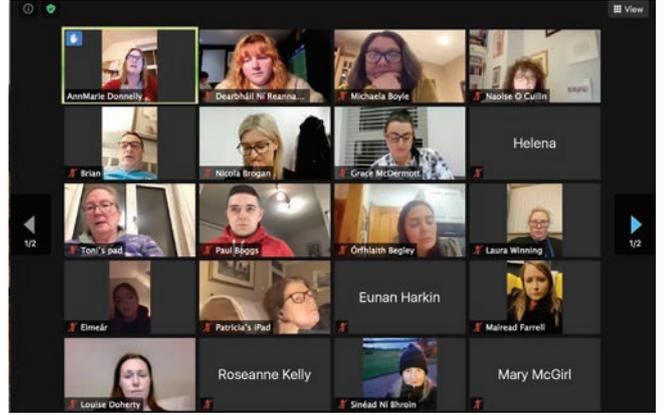
- ▶▶ Stands ready as a Council to work and engage with all statutory bodies and with civil society to plan and prepare for such a referendum on Irish Unity, and strive for a positive outcome to that referendum.

Derry and Strabane and Mid Ulster Councils plan to launch a consultation exercise with ratepayers and stakeholders on Irish Unity in the coming months. While we wait for the Irish Government to establish a Citizens' Assembly on Irish Unity Local Government is moving ahead and facilitating the discussion and the debate about what the priorities are in a new United Ireland.

Youth Conference Derry



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht



WOMEN LEADING A NEW IRELAND

BY NICOLA BROGAN

As we move through the decade of centenaries it is accepted that women were excluded from the construction of the two partitioned states on the island. The result of this exclusion can be felt across Irish society today.

Despite the inequalities and fear heaped on women we have always fought back.

For International Women's Day Sinn Féin organised several events under the theme 'Women Leading a New Ireland'. These were held in Dublin, Belfast, West Tyrone and other areas across the country.



Discussions included the role of women in shaping a new Ireland; building on our successes to date in challenging discrimination, violence and harassment, social and economic inequality and why there is a need to increase representation from women at all levels of decision making. Our record in delivering positive change, not just for ourselves but for Irish society, speaks for itself.

Yet fear of harassment and violence remains part and parcel of our daily lives. Women continue to be underrepresented in politics, and overrepresented in precarious low paid employment. We do most of the caring yet receive minimal state support. Misogyny remains engrained across Irish society. All of this must change in a new and united Ireland.

#Time4Unity **Am d'Aontacht**

TIME FOR PRESIDENTIAL VOTING RIGHTS

BY GERRY ADAMS

As readers will know citizens outside the southern state, including those in the North are denied the right to vote in elections to select the President of Ireland. This is despite support for this right by the current government. It is in the programme for government. It is also supported by a Constitutional Convention.

In June 2019 the Irish government announced that it would hold a referendum on Presidential Voting Rights. The Referendum was scheduled for October of that year. This was not the first time a date had been set for this referendum.

In 2013, the Constitutional Convention agreed that Irish citizens in the North and the diaspora should have the right to vote in presidential elections. In November 2015 the Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Affairs recommended extending the voting rights. In October 2018 An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced that a referendum would be held in May 2019. None of this happened.

Seanadóir Niall O Donnghaile has pursued government Ministers on this issue since his election to the Seanad six years ago. The last time Niall raised it as a Commencement Matter in the Seanad was with the then Minister of State with responsibility for the diaspora in November 2020. Back then the country was in the grip of the pandemic and it wasn't possible or practicable to hold a referendum due to the health restrictions.

In March Niall raised the Presidential referendum with the Minister of State, Frank Feighan, who has over the years expressed his support for the referendum also.

During the debate in the Seanad Niall remarked that over the St. Patrick's Day period many ministers and politicians will be travelling overseas to join in the celebrations. At least 33 in person visits will take place to venues in the USA, Canada, the EU and elsewhere and where no

such visits occur the local Embassies will facilitate celebrations. This is a measure of the size of the Irish diaspora scattered across the globe. A key issue of concern for the diaspora is the right to vote in presidential elections.

Niall also reminded the Minister that Leo Varadkar, when Taoiseach, promised citizens in the North in December 2017 that "no Irish government will ever again leave northern nationalists behind".

Niall called on the government to honour the commitment it has made to the diaspora and to extend full citizenship rights to the people of the North and hold a referendum in this 'crucial and opportune timeframe'.

He recalled the extensive preparatory work that has already been done: a commitment from the Constitutional Convention; the legislation had been published but fell during the previous Oireachtas; it was then reissued, republished and returned to the Order Paper.

One of the most basic rights and entitlements of any citizen is the right to vote.

The President is not the president of a land mass, as he recently said eloquently – he is President of the Irish people. It is only right that all Irish people have the entitlement to vote whether it is the global diaspora family or our fellow citizens just up the road in the six counties. It is time for the government to outline a timeframe and to implement this non-contentious commitment.



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